

ROXANNE

Screenplay by

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EXT. STREET - NIGHT

SUPER: TWO YEARS EARLIER

We are on a dark, empty street in a quiet section of ASPEN, COLORADO. We see and hear the FOOTSTEPS of a man walking jauntily and WHISTLING. We STAY WITH his feet as he approaches a car parked on the street. Dimly in the lamplight, we can see three shadowy figures breaking into the car. The FEET head toward the three men, and we can still hear the man WHISTLING. They become aware of his presence and THE VOICE speaks:

VOICE

That's my car.

FIRST THUG

Well, then you just walked into a problem.

VOICE

I really admire your shoes.

FIRST THUG

What?

VOICE

I love your shoes.

SECOND THUG

What do you mean?

VOICE

And I was just thinking that, as much as I admire your shoes, and as much as I would love to have a pair just like them, I really wouldn't want to be in your shoes at this particular time and place.

The three thugs advance on the voice. But suddenly, WHAM! A sailing blow strikes across the three of them. They all fall back, shocked. They advance again -- this time receiving well-placed KICKS, PUNCHES and SLUGS, all delivered swiftly, beautifully, wonderfully. They lie in the street moaning. The CAMERA TILTS UP to reveal "the voice". It is HENRY HUDSON, whose face we see STRAIGHT ON. He is thirty-eight, is nice enough looking, and surveys the three groaning men. Suddenly, his face turns to the side, backlit by the streetlamp, and we see that he has a FOUR INCH LONG NOSE!



## INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

The clock reads 2:30 am. ROXANNE SHEPPARD is on the phone in the kitchen of a Victorian house. In her late twenties, she is young enough to be beautiful and old enough to be interesting. She is wearing a light-weight bathrobe. Her conversation is alert and sharp, and her eyes flash spiritedly as she speaks.

ROXANNE

(into the phone)

...they're going to have to pry  
me off you with a crowbar.  
You're going to be exhausted...  
Richard, the sex squad is going  
to have to take you out on a  
stretcher. You're going to pick  
me up aren't you? You might not  
get out of the airport. What?...  
I'm not wearing anything.  
Nothing. Just my robe, here  
look.

With her back to us, she opens her robe and holds the phone toward her body. She laughs brightly. Suddenly, WE HEAR from outdoors, the WHINE OF A CAT.

ROXANNE

(continuing,  
hearing the cat)

...Oh God, there's Grover! He's  
been gone for four hours...Hang  
on a second.

She sets the phone down and goes over to the door and opens it. A BLAST of icy cold air hits her and she SHIVERS.

ROXANNE

(continuing)

Shit! Goddamn it's freezing!  
(calls the cat)  
Grover! Grover!

The cat sits tauntingly out of her reach.

ROXANNE

(continuing)

Grover!

She steps outside the door, holding it open with one foot. Her breath FOGS UP in the cold. She yells back into the phone which is laying on the kitchen table.

ROXANNE  
(continuing, yelling  
into phone)  
I'll be with you in a second,  
Richard! Damn you, Grover...

The cat still sits calmly staring at her. She leans forward toward it, HER FOOT looses its grip on the door and it SLAMS SHUT. She tries the door. It's LOCKED.

ROXANNE  
(continuing)  
Shit!

She is freezing cold, jumping up and down to warm herself.

ROXANNE  
(continuing, yelling  
through the window)  
Richard, I'm locked out! I'll  
go around through the front!

She starts to go, but we see that HER ROBE IS CAUGHT IN THE DOOR. She struggles with it, but it is no use. Still freezing, she looks around into the darkness and sees no one, so she slips out of her robe and is STARK NAKED. She runs around to the front of the house and tries the door; it too IS LOCKED.

ROXANNE  
(continuing)  
Oh God!....

INT. FIRE STATION - NIGHT

FOUR FIREMEN play poker. They are in firemen's clothes and sit in the upstairs part of the firehouse. Henry enters from his escapade in the street, and dials the phone as the men give him nods and greetings.

HENRY  
(quietly into phone)  
...It's Henry. If you hurry you  
can pick up three men in the  
alley behind Culverson's...I  
think they'll be there another  
fifteen minutes at least.  
They're resting.

He hangs up the phone.

FIRST MAN  
Hey Chief, sit in for a while.

HENRY  
Even though I'm only interested  
in the higher things in life,  
I'll play one hand.

SECOND MAN  
(kidding)  
You're a dead man.

They deal the cards.

EXT. ROXANNE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Still naked, she tries the other doors and window. They too  
are all locked.

INT. FIRE HOUSE - NIGHT

The firemen continue to play cards.

FIRST MAN  
I raise.

HENRY  
Call.

THIRD MAN  
Out.

FIRST MAN  
(laying down his  
cards)  
Aces and nines.

HENRY  
Aces and tens.

The First Man throws in his cards, disgusted.

FIRST MAN  
...beat me by a Goddamn nose.

On those words, the table suddenly falls silent. The eyes of  
the other men look FEARFULLY toward Henry. He stares  
menacingly at the FIRST MAN who made the offending remark, then  
softens.

HENRY  
Well, at least it's not a  
shortcoming.

The men laugh nervously. They are interrupted by a knock from  
downstairs.

HENRY

(continuing)

Jeez...

(checks his watch)

I'll get it.

THIRD MAN

Don't forget to come back;  
you've got all our money.

HENRY

I'm only winning because I don't  
care.

INT. FIRE STATION - NIGHT

Henry comes down the stairs, revealing in the background a small, but complete firehouse complete with a mini-truck. He goes and opens the door, but HE SEES NO ONE.

HENRY

Hello?

We hear Roxanne's voice from behind large bush.

ROXANNE

I'm locked out of my house.

HENRY

I can get you back in. Come on  
in; I'll get some tools.

ROXANNE

I'll stay out here.

HENRY

Okay.

(starting, then  
stopping)

Why are you standing in that  
bush?

ROXANNE

I don't have any clothes on.

Henry looks, and can faintly see a naked figure in the bush.

HENRY

I'll get the tools. You want a  
coat?

ROXANNE

No, I'd really like to stand  
naked in this bush.

He goes back inside and grabs a crowbar. One of the firemen pokes his head downstairs.

FIREMAN

What is it?

HENRY

Oh, somebody locked out of their house.

FIREMAN

Need some help?

HENRY

Looks pretty boring. I can take care of it.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Henry hustles down the street. The bushes rustle along beside him as Roxanne moves behind them. They keep moving through the whole conversation.

ROXANNE

(from behind the bushes)

Nobody had a coat?

HENRY

I thought you said you didn't want a coat.

ROXANNE

Why would I not want a coat?

HENRY

You said you didn't want a coat.

ROXANNE

I was being ironic.

HENRY

Miss, one doesn't run into a lot of irony in Aspen. People ski topless here. You better tinge your irony with sarcasm so's I'll know when you're doing it.

ROXANNE

Oh brother...

(then)

It's over here.



## EXT. ROXANNE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Henry works on the door with his crowbar. Roxanne is in the background JUMPING around trying to keep warm.

ROXANNE

Oh God...Oh God...Yayayayaya.

HENRY

Would it make you feel better if  
I was naked too?

He laughs, and finally gets the door free. Roxanne runs past him up the stairs, flashing a little bit of her backside.

## INT. ROXANNE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Roxanne comes down the stairs, dressed in a blanket, and peers at Henry, who is still outside in the dark.

ROXANNE

Thank you very much. Why don't  
you close the door and come in  
and I'll fix you some tea or I  
have wine if you want it.

Henry deliberates for a moment, then comes in, out of the darkness, and into the light of the kitchen. Roxanne SEES HIM, is startled momentarily by his outrageous nose, but carries on. THE CAT sneaks in when he opens the door.

ROXANNE

Wine?

HENRY

Okay.

She pours a couple of glasses and they sit at the kitchen table. Suddenly, she notices the phone still laying off the hook.

ROXANNE

(picking up the  
phone)

Hello?

(then, to Henry)

I'll have to call him back. Do  
you mind?

HENRY

This isn't another one of your  
tricks is it?

ROXANNE

Huh?

HENRY

Irony.

She looks at him curiously, then realizes he's joking and laughs along with him. She picks up the phone, dials, and carries it into the other room. Henry looks at her, a dishevelled, pretty, mess. He LOOKS around the room and sees her things lying around: a stack of college BOOKS dealing with the sciences, a packed SUITCASE ready to go, a small TELESCOPE about to be packed, a TYPEWRITER. The atmosphere is punctuated with the sound of Roxanne's rollicking laughter coming from the other room. We HEAR her say goodbye and she trots into the kitchen.

ROXANNE

Sorry. I'm getting married in three weeks. Here have some more.

She fills his glass.

ROXANNE

(continuing)

Are you married?

HENRY

No.

ROXANNE

Don't you believe in it?

HENRY

I believe in it.

ROXANNE

Oh good. Then we can talk about it. I believe in it all. I believe in every word he says to me; I believe he loves me. God, I feel good!

Henry looks at her, stares at her.

HENRY

My name's Henry. I'm the fire chief.

ROXANNE

I'm Roxanne. Thank you very much for helping me.

HENRY

Do you live in this house? I don't think I've seen you.

ROXANNE

No, just rent for the summer. I come here every summer to write. I teach college in Denver.

HENRY

You write? So do I. What about?

ROXANNE

Science. For journals, things like that. What do you write?

HENRY

I...uh...I can't tell you.

ROXANNE

What do you mean you can't tell me?

HENRY

I just can't tell you. It's a secret.

ROXANNE

You can't have secrets from me...You've seen me naked!

HENRY

I've never told anyone.

ROXANNE

I don't have any secrets. You can't either.

HENRY

All right, I'm going to trust you. But if you tell anyone... I'll...I'll... have you killed.

ROXANNE

What is it.

HENRY

I'm Aunt Shirley.

ROXANNE

(she gasps)

Oh, my God. You write the Aunt Shirley column? I read that! That's the one that's satirical about the town.

HENRY

Yeah.

ROXANNE

Oh, God, I love that. I remember one thing you said that was real funny...oh what was it...Oh yeah, "I would rather be with the people in this town, than with the finest people in the world."

They laugh.

ROXANNE

(continuing)

It's very good.

The clock strikes three.

ROXANNE

I've got to get one of those seven am planes tomorrow. God, why do they do that to people?

HENRY

Well, I'd better get going.

ROXANNE

No, no. Stay for a minute.

She pours more wine for both of them. She watches Henry struggle with the wine glass to avoid his nose. Henry sees her watching.

HENRY

Don't worry. I make up for it by being witty.

ROXANNE

I think you look proud.

There is a silence as he looks at her.

ROXANNE

(continuing)

So how did you get to be a fireman?

HENRY

In college I was in my literature class - I really wanted to write - and I smelled smoke. Nobody else smelled it. I kept insisting that I did, and sure enough, there was a fire inside the walls. Everybody got out in time, and I was swept up into being a fireman because of my extraordinary...gifts.

(then)

Did you say your name was Roxanne?

ROXANNE

Yes.

HENRY

It's very...unusual. Pretty...

(then)

Well, I've got to get back.

ROXANNE

Well, okay. But wish me luck.

HENRY

On?

ROXANNE

My marriage. It's going to be all love and sweetness and beauty.

HENRY

(raises his glass)

Here's to love and sweetness and beauty.

They drink.

ROXANNE

Thank you Henry.

He leaves.

EXT. ROXANNE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Henry stands outside the house, looking in at Roxanne turning out the lamps one by one. The light goes dark on his face.

HENRY

(to himself)

Roxanne.

Everything slowly fades to black.

INT. ASPEN AIRPORT - DAY

SUPER: THE PRESENT

It is TWO YEARS LATER and the beginning of summer in the resort community. One of the Rocky Mountain Airways planes has unloaded its passengers and they are coming through the gate. It's a dashing group of vacationers, and among them is the slightly scruffy, but magnetically handsome, CHRIS MACCONNEL. He carries a skiers duffle bag, wears sunglasses, is just sloppy enough to be appealing, and oozes a naive sexuality. Another man, JOHNSON, enters from the street. He is a tall man, about thirty, slightly roguish, and energetic. He stands waiting in the baggage area, and approaches a pretty girl. CHRIS overhears the conversation.

JOHNSON  
(to girl)  
June, '83.

GIRL  
What?

JOHNSON  
June, '83. You were playmate of  
the month, June, '83.

GIRL  
No, I wasn't.

JOHNSON  
That's funny, I thought I  
recognized your inner-diameter  
slope.

GIRL  
What's that?

JOHNSON  
That's the part of the back of  
the leg that curves into your  
inner thigh.

GIRL  
(disbelieving)  
Jesus Christ.

She grabs her luggage and walks out. JOHNSON looks over at CHRIS.

JOHNSON  
(to Chris)  
Works every time.

Chris is grabbing his bags. Johnson yells to the baggage handlers.

JOHNSON  
Hey, Grady! There's supposed to  
be a box here for the fire  
department!

GRADY (O.S.)  
It's coming!

Chris comes to life.

CHRIS  
(to Johnson)  
I'm with the fire department.

JOHNSON  
No, you're not. I'm in the fire  
department, and the place is too  
small for me not to have noticed  
you.

CHRIS  
I'm new.

At that moment, the fire department's crate comes over the  
baggage counter. It's huge.

JOHNSON  
This is it? Grady, this is it?  
They said pick up the computer;  
I thought computers were teeny  
little things. Shit.

CHRIS  
I can help you.

JOHNSON  
Jesus, I could damage my vocal  
chords lifting something like  
this! I've got to sing tonight.  
Fireman by day, but on Saturday  
night, songbird.

He pronounces the ch in "chords."

EXT. AIRPORT - NIGHT

Chris and Johnson are loading the immense box into the back of  
a Jeep. Johnson spots a pretty girl at a payphone. He shouts  
to her.

JOHNSON  
(to girl)  
June, '83.

SECOND GIRL  
(startled)  
What?

JOHNSON  
June, '83.

He walks over to her, but we stay with Chris' POV and cannot hear what they are saying. A few words are exchanged, but this time the girl goes for his line. He comes back with her, a broad grin on his face, and escorts her into the car.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

CLOSE-UP -- ROXANNE'S FACE.

We are tight on the face of Roxanne. But this time she's NOT exuberantly happy like she was before. Something is gone from her smile, from her attitude. She's quieter than she was, and only occasionally do we see flashes of the way we saw her before.

ROXANNE  
It's very pretty, Gertie.

We see the Victorian house she is staring at, and Gertie, an elderly but vital real estate agent.

GERTIE  
(excited)  
I knew you would like it! And it's only \$7500 for the whole summer.

ROXANNE  
Gertie, I've never heard you quote a figure that didn't have an "only" in front of it.

GERTIE  
Thus is the nature of my work.

INT. ROXANNE'S HOUSE - DAY

Gertie and Roxanne enter the furnished Victorian, carrying a couple of her suitcases.

ROXANNE  
I can put my typewriter here and look out over the garden.



GERTIE

And there're two TVs. One upstairs and one downstairs. I can bring over a Betamax if you want; I've got every Dallas.

ROXANNE

You still watching Dallas?

GERTIE

I eat Dallas.  
(then)  
You want the tapes?

ROXANNE

No. Not this summer. This is the year Halley's comet is coming. I'm going to be looking through a telescope this summer.

GERTIE

When's Richard coming?

She falls silent, then speaks.

ROXANNE

Not. Not coming.

GERTIE

Why not?

ROXANNE

That's over.

GERTIE

My God! What happened?

ROXANNE

After our last summer here... I think we bored each other...just ran out of gas.

GERTIE

I'm really sorry, Roxanne.

ROXANNE

I think I mistook sex for love.  
Do you have any aspirin?

GERTIE

(fishing in her  
purse)  
Try a couple of these mothers.

ROXANNE

If they're mothers I'll just take one. I always get a headache the first day at this altitude.

GERTIE

So then what happened?

ROXANNE

When?

GERTIE

When you split up.

ROXANNE

Oh, just the usual grief. My sister's pregnant and has this regular life with a nice-guy husband, and I feel like I'm never going to find anyone.

GERTIE

Roxanne, all you need to do is get laid about sixteen times by some of these guys around here. Just don't mistake it for love.

ROXANNE

If you're feeling empty you don't do something that's going to make you feel emptier.

GERTIE

I promise you you'll feel full.

ROXANNE

(laughing at Gertie)

Who needs a comet with you around.

GERTIE

Your book hits the stores today. What's it called?

ROXANNE

..."Visitations of Halley's Comet." I tried to get it in the stores by the time the comet got here.

GERTIE

So tell me what it's about before I read it.

ROXANNE

You don't have to read it. It's pretty technical.

(explaining)

It comes every seventy-six years. One year the earth passed through the tail and people thought it would be the end, but it wasn't. People always thought it was magical, that it was a sign.

Gertie opens the refrigerator door.

GERTIE

Oh great! A beer!

Roxanne peers into the refrigerator.

ROXANNE

I better get to the store.

(then, indicating

Gertie's beer)

I'll have half.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Roxanne is walking down the street with an armload of groceries. MAYOR BLACK, a man in his early fifties, calls to her from his car.

MAYOR BLACK

Roxanne!

ROXANNE

Oh hi! I heard they made you Mayor again...when are they going to learn?

MAYOR BLACK

Put your groceries in and I'll drive you.

ROXANNE

You don't have to.

MAYOR BLACK

Yes I do, this will look very good on my record next year. You writing this summer?

ROXANNE

That and photographing the comet. Just for fun.

MAYOR BLACK

I promise I'll get your book.

ROXANNE

Don't really. It's all technical. I should have had the comet get killed at the end.

She gets in with her groceries, and the car drives off.

INT. CAR - DAY

Roxanne sits next to the mayor. She notices a copy of the Aspen Times on the seat, open to Aunt Shirley's column.

ROXANNE

So you're reading Aunt Shirley?

MAYOR

I try not to.

ROXANNE

Why? Don't you think it's funny? I think I have all the code names figured out. "Cousin" is that sleezy ski instructor Cory; "Jeff" is that decorator who runs that awful shop that sells the animal horn chairs. Who's the "wombat?" I've never figured that out.

MAYOR

Me.

ROXANNE

Oh. Sorry. What's he got against you?

MAYOR

He?

ROXANNE

(catching herself)

She. Aunt Shirley.

MAYOR

I guess she's jealous because I make a dollar a year.

They drive on.

INT. NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

It's night and we're with JOHNSON and CHRIS again. They

converse over drinks at the bar. Johnson turns to the room and shouts aloud:

JOHNSON

(shouting)

I can lick any girl in the house!

(then, quiet

to Chris)

...I'll tell you what depresses me, Chris. This town has so many girls. I've never seen so many girls in one place

CHRIS

That depresses you?

JOHNSON

No. That's not what depresses me. What depresses me is when I see so many women in one place, I want them all. I want to go to bed with every one of them.

CHRIS

That's what depresses you?

JOHNSON

No, that's not what depresses me. What depresses me is when I realize I want to go to bed with all these women, I think about all the women who lived before I was born, and I can never have them 'cause they're dead. And that's what depresses me.

CHRIS

That is depressing. I never really thought of it that way.

JOHNSON

Well, it's a goddamn fucking fact of life. Hey, you've got to get out there and meet some women.

CHRIS

I'm not too good at that. I kind of freeze up.

JOHNSON

Well, unfreeze! Give it a shot. Try that girl over there.

CHRIS  
No, no, I couldn't.

JOHNSON  
What have you got to lose? Go!  
Go!

He pushes Chris up toward the girl.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Chris approaches her, radically nervous. Johnson looks on in the background. The girl turns and notices Chris, forcing him to say something.

CHRIS  
(paralyzed)  
I...I...uh...was wondering...uh,  
if..uh, those are your real  
breasts?

GIRL  
Yes.

CHRIS  
Thank you.

Shaken, he leaves, and walks back to the table.

CHRIS  
(to Johnson)  
They are.

JOHNSON  
What.

CHRIS  
Her real breasts.

JOHNSON  
Jesus, watch me.

Johnson goes over to the same girl.

JOHNSON  
(continuing)  
I have a big car.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Chris and Johnson walk tipsily down the street.

CHRIS

So if she's meeting you at eleven-thirty, how come you want to meet another one?

JOHNSON

I'll tell you why, and I hope you're paying attention to these lessons. Unless you can leave with a girl right then and there, you can never be sure if they're really gonna show up. I mean you're not there with them to keep them convinced. They might get nervous, or they couldn't get away from their boyfriends, whatever. So if you're meeting one at eleven-thirty you better have one you're meeting somewhere else at twelve as a back-up. Listen, you've definitely got to get started on some of these women. In three months the summer's over!

CHRIS

Maybe I have to be introduced...

JOHNSON

Introduced? Chris, it's going to be a long summer for you.

(checks watch)

Shit! I'm on stage in seven minutes. Let's get over to the Opera House.

CHRIS

You sing opera?

JOHNSON

The opera house is where the club is. It's this hundred year old building but there's a night club downstairs.

Suddenly, a voice shouts at them.

VOICE (O.S)

Hey pussies, cut a wide swath!

JOHNSON

Oh, shit.

VOICE

Other side of the street...out  
of our way.

We see down the street, TWO BIG DRUNKEN MEN, exactly the  
Jeep-driving, lumberjack types one can see in a macho resort  
town on Saturday night.

CHRIS

Is he telling us to move?

JOHNSON

Yeah, come on.

CHRIS

You're crazy...fuck them.

JOHNSON

(grabbing Chris)

These guys have two very dan-  
gerous qualities, big and dumb.

Johnson and Chris move to the other side of the street. Chris  
doesn't like it.

INT. OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT

It is the nightclub where Johnson performs, situated in the  
bottom floor of a hundred year old OPERA HOUSE. There is a lot  
of activity.

ANGLE

A pretty cocktail waitress serves drinks to handsome skiers.

ANOTHER ANGLE

A little coke goes up someone's nose.

ANOTHER ANGLE

A fight breaks out, but is quickly contained. It's rowdy here.

ANOTHER ANGLE

A pretty cocktail girl, CAROL, walks by a slightly tipsy  
ski-bum type, CHUCK.

CHUCK

(grabbing her arm)

Hey, Carol, I need a nice big  
pair of boobs.



CAROL  
Try the White House.

## ANOTHER ANGLE

A floor sweeper, with a dust pan on a stick, sweeps parts of the hall. The CAMERA PANS DOWN the handle and we see there is a Kodak attached to it, pointing up, taking photos under women's skirts.

## ANOTHER ANGLE

A couple is in a dark corner. The man has his hand on the woman's breast as they kiss.

## ANOTHER ANGLE

Johnson and Chris enter, passing the doorman who is collecting the cover charge. Johnson, irrepressible, still scans the room for women.

DOORMAN  
We was gettin' worried.

JOHNSON  
I'm here. I'm here.

DOORMAN  
Big crowd.

JOHNSON  
Uh, yeah.

They move through the crowd.

## ANGLE ON THE DOOR

We see the doorman who is collecting the cover charge. Just entering are ERNIE AND DIXIE SAMUELS. They run the local cafe where the firemen hang out and have breakfast, which just happens to be next door to the fire station. They are well-loved in the town, in spite of their odd appearance. She is four feet eight inches; he is slightly taller than normal. They see Johnson and come over to him.

ERNIE  
(to Chris)  
Hi, I'm Ernie and this is Dixie.

CHRIS  
Hi.

JOHNSON

They run the best coffee shop in town.

DIXIE

Welcome to the love boat.

They ad lib hellos and shake hands.

ERNIE

I'm going to get a beer.

DIXIE

Come on, let's sit down.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Suddenly, ROXANNE and her girlfriend SANDY, enter the hall. Chris' eyes go to her, transfixed. Johnson sees her too.

JOHNSON

God, it's Roxanne. She could certainly make my night.

Chris is captivated by her. Roxanne's eyes scan across him too. Meanwhile, a wirey looking man, RALSTON, has approached Roxanne. This one's not trying to pick her up, however. He's just chatting and saying hello.

CHRIS

Who's she?

JOHNSON

She writes books on Astronomy or Astrology or something. What time do you start tomorrow?

CHRIS

(staring at Roxanne)

I think ten.

JOHNSON

Do me a favor will you? I don't come in till two and I could sleep late if you'd pick up this book for the Chief.

He hands him a note paper with writing on it.

CHRIS

(Pockets the note)

Sure.

JOHNSON  
All the stuff's on the note.  
Great! I can sleep!

CHRIS  
(still staring at  
Roxanne)  
Who's the guy?

JOHNSON  
That's Ralston. Chief of the  
so-called police.

ANGLE ON

The door. The two drunks who threatened Johnson earlier are  
entering. The first man speaks to the doorman.

DRUNK  
I get in free.

DOORMAN  
Why?

DRUNK  
'Cause I'm just so goddamn big.

DOORMAN  
Oh....okay.

The other drunk approaches.

DOORMAN  
Five dollars please.

SECOND DRUNK  
I get in free too.

DOORMAN  
Why?

SECOND DRUNK  
Friend of the big guy.

DOORMAN  
Oh.

ANGLE ON

Johnson and Dixie. Johnson sees the two drunks entering.

JOHNSON

Oh God, just what I need, Freud and Jung. Well, I better get ready.

DIXIE

Who are they?

JOHNSON

A couple of guys looking for trouble.

He gets up and goes toward the backstage area. Ernie and Dixie exchange disturbed glances.

ANGLE ON THE TWO DRUNKS

Noisily finding a place to sit, they order more beers and generally create a disturbance.

ANGLE ON DIXIE

She gets up and goes over to the bartender.

DIXIE

Rob, can I use the phone?

ROB

Sure.

He puts the phone up on the counter.

INT. HENRY'S APT. - NIGHT

The phone rings in Henry's apartment.

HENRY (O.S.)

Hi, Dixie...Yeah...really?

Sure, I'll come by.

INT. NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

Chris nervously drinks his beer.

JOHNSON

(To Chris)

Look, someone's looking at you.

He indicates Roxanne. She is indeed looking at him, out of the corner of her eye.

JOHNSON

If I was you, I'd do something about that.

CHRIS  
I want to...I just can't.

JOHNSON  
Boy, you're going to let your  
whole life go by.

Chris is still petrified.

JOHNSON  
(continuing)  
Well, if you won't, I will.

Chris summons all the courage he has.

CHRIS  
No...I'll go.

He rises, nervously, and goes over to her.

ANGLE ON ROXANNE

We see her, with Chris advancing in the background, but at the last second, Chuck, the ski bum from earlier, steps in front of him. Chris stops short, and can overhear the conversation. Chuck is disgustingly over-casual.

CHUCK  
I'd like to invite you to an  
Aspen tradition of hot-tubbing.

ROXANNE  
Pardon me?

CHUCK  
It's kind of a tradition here to  
have mulled wine and then some  
outdoor hot-tubbing.

ROXANNE  
Tradition? You mean the set-  
tlers came here a hundred years  
ago and started hot-tubbing?

CHUCK  
Huh?

ROXANNE  
You have a hot tub?

CHUCK  
Oh yeah.

ROXANNE

How long?

CHUCK

Three months.

ROXANNE

So this is a tradition that really started about three months ago.

CHUCK

Hey, you're fiesty. I like that.

On that line, she looks glumly at Sandy. She turns back to Chuck.

ROXANNE

I'm sorry. But I just have to stop talking now.

CHUCK

Tell you what. I'll be over there...

(to bartender)

Rob, fix her up with a mulled wine...

(back to Roxanne)

...and you start thinking about it and just come on over if you change your mind. And I think you might.

ROXANNE

Well, if I do change my mind you'll be able to tell because my breasts will be heaving and moist with perspiration.

CHUCK

Hey, you're foxy.

ROXANNE

So long.

CHUCK

Later.

Chuck swaggers back to his table. Roxanne looks morose and Sandy laughs hysterically.

ROXANNE

So this is what it's going to be  
like being single.

SANDY

He had a great ass.

ROXANNE

Too bad it was on his shoulders.

SANDY

He was pretty cute too.

ROXANNE

Listen, I have nothing against  
cute; I just... God I'd love to  
meet someone with half a brain  
this time.

Chris, who has been standing by overhearing all this, is drawn up short. At that moment, Roxanne's head turns and STARES STRAIGHT INTO HIS EYES. There is indeed a moment of "Some Enchanted Evening." He stands silent, fearful, unable to speak; but in his stupor, with the light falling on him so his already handsome features are accentuated, he looks more sophisticated and intelligent than he really is. Finally, his confusion and fear drive him away, perspiring. He panics and leaves the club.

ANGLE ON ROXANNE

We see Roxanne, who watches Chris exit. She is obviously taken with him.

EXT. NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

Chris flies out of the door and throws up around the corner of the building.

INT. OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT

ROXANNE

(to Sandy)

Who was that?

SANDY

I don't know, but if he'd asked,  
I would have gone anywhere and  
done anything.

ROXANNE

Oh, brother.

SANDY

Roxanne, you're in a funk. If you like him you ought to meet him. You've got to get out into the world. It doesn't come get you; you've got to go get it!

ROXANNE

No, I think I'll just sit here and wait for a miracle.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

We see Henry walking toward the club. We can hear the growing noise from the nightclub in the background.

INT. NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

Johnson is on stage performing. He works with a guitar and you can tell he's at home on the stage. It's a real folk act for a rowdy nightclub crowd. He wraps up a bawdy song, and the crowd applauds. Johnson takes a swig from a bottle of wine.

ANGLE ON THE DRUNKS

DRUNK

(loudly, about Johnson)  
He's a fag.

ANGLE ON JOHNSON

JOHNSON

...This next song was written almost four hundred years ago by William Shakespeare, and set to music by William Shumann.

He sings comically in a terrible voice.

JOHNSON

(singing)  
IF I COULD MAKE LOVE TO ANYONE  
IN THE WORLD,  
IT WOULD BE YOU...  
AND YOUR SISTER. (or: I love  
you so much I can't shit.)

The crowd laughs. Getting noticeably drunk, he takes another drink from the bottle.

ANGLE ON THE DOOR



Henry enters the nightclub and we follow him to a darkened corner.

ANGLE ON DIXIE

She looks over at Henry and smiles.

ANGLE ON THE DRUNKS

DRUNK

Get off, asshole!

JOHNSON

(an instant response;  
he's had hecklers  
before)

First they learn how to clap  
like a seal, now they're working  
on complete sentences.

(continuing)

So this is one of your favorite  
songs, I hope it's mine...

The drunk emits a loud belch, followed by:

DRUNK

Let's boogie! Get down.

JOHNSON

(under his breath)

Jesus Christ.

(to audience)

Boy, I remember when I had my  
first beer.

DRUNKS

(chanting)

Boogie! Boogie! Boogie!

JOHNSON

(to audience)

The sad part is, this is the  
highlight of their day. They go  
home, "did you hear when I said  
'boogie'? I was soooo funny!"

DRUNK

Kiss my ass!

Johnson angrily, deliberately, gives him the finger.  
ONE OF THE DRUNKS, reddened with anger, picks up a beer bottle  
and THROWS it hard at Johnson.

## ANGLE ON BEER BOTTLE

In SLOW MOTION, the beer bottle hurtles toward Johnson.

## ANGLE ON HENRY

Just before the bottle would have hit Johnson, we see Henry bound gracefully across the room and snag it. He lands sharply. The shocked crowd quiets.

HENRY

What luck! A free-flying beer!  
Rarely seen in captivity...

The crowd laughs again. He turns and takes a swig, and we see his nose in glorious, back-lit, profile.

HENRY

(continuing)  
HMMMMM. Tasty too.  
(then)  
I believe this is yours.

He throws the bottle back to the drunk.

HENRY

If it flies away again, we'll  
get you a new, more stationery  
one.

(then, to Johnson)  
On with the show, Johnson!

FIRST DRUNK

There ain't gonna be no show.

HENRY

(intense)  
Yes, there is.

FIRST DRUNK

No, there ain't!

HENRY

(mocking voice)  
Yes, there ain't!

The drunk SMASHES the beer bottle on the table, making it a weapon.

FIRST DRUNK

No, there ain't.

HENRY  
Yes, there aim't!

Henry leaps upon a table and from a wall display of crossed skis, grabs a SKI POLE. He wields it like a sword and spears the bottle through the neck, pinning it to a wall. The crowd cheers.

DRUNK  
Asshole! Shithead! Bastard!

HENRY  
(playing to the crowd)  
Well, now he's going to want to know who I am.

DRUNK  
You better sit down, big nose.

There is an audible gasp from the crowd. They seem to know this is something one does not say.

HENRY  
Pardon me?

DRUNK  
You heard me... big nose.

Henry's face makes a visible, frightening change.

HENRY  
(calmly)  
Really.

DRUNK  
Yeah. Big nose.

HENRY  
Is that all?

DRUNK  
Well, yeah.

HENRY  
Well, you really got me on that one.

He starts to walk away.

HENRY  
(continuing)  
Uh...wait a second. God, what a waste of an opportunity.

DRUNK

What?

HENRY

Well, I mean you've got a guy  
standing in front of you with  
this...

He indicates his nose.

HENRY

(continuing)

...and all you can think of is  
Big Nose.

DRUNK

I suppose you could think up  
something better?

HENRY

Something better? I could think  
up something better in my sleep!  
I could burp something better!  
I could juggle, turn a back  
flip, and dance at the same time  
and think up something better.  
In fact, I could think up five  
something betters.

(then)

Johnson! Play some music.

The crowd cheers at the word "dance." Johnson starts an  
insistent, rhythmic beat on his guitar.

HENRY

Wait. This wouldn't be fair.  
You're smashed, I would say  
completely blotto.

(to bartender)

Rob, toss me a glass.

He is tossed a glass and then addresses a customer.

HENRY

(continuing)

Pardon me, what are you drink-  
ing?

CUSTOMER

Vodka tonic.

HENRY

Do you mind?

Henry picks up the glass and pours the cregs into HIS GLASS. He does this with five or six other customers, EACH WITH A DIFFERENT DRINK, and mixes it into one disgusting concoction and DRINKS IT DOWN. Then, Henry begins a lively, odd, peculiar little trot that has him flying from one end of the floor to the other. At an appropriate moment in the tune, he stops in front of the drunk.

HENRY  
(continuing)  
Watch it! With an eraser like  
that, there must be a mighty big  
pencil around here somewhere.

He takes off again across the floor, this time picking up three oranges from the bar and juggles them. He stops again in front of the drunk.

HENRY  
(continuing,  
romantically)  
Well, here we are, just the  
three of us.

Same dance bit again.

HENRY  
(continuing)  
You know, it might de-emphasize  
your nose if you wore something  
larger, like Wyoming.

Dance bit.

HENRY  
(continuing)  
B'wana! B'wana! Someone's  
stolen one of our spears!...  
(calling off)  
Forget it fellows, I found it!

Same bit again.

HENRY  
(different voice)  
Hi, I'm Earl Scheib and I can  
paint that nose for \$39.95!

DRUNK  
You smart-ass son-of-a-bitch.

The music still plays, and the drunk suddenly attacks Henry, CHASING HIM ACROSS THE DANCE FLOOR. Henry avoids him with

quick dance steps, and then, climbs all over him, like a monkey on a tree, finally knocking him out with a chair that is flung from behind Henry's back.

NOTE: THIS WILL ALL BE WORKED OUT TO BE AS FUNNY AS POSSIBLE WITHOUT LOOKING CHOREOGRAPHED.

The song COMES TO AN END and he finishes with a flourish. The crowd loves it.

HENRY  
(continuing)  
If anyone else has a comment  
about my nose, you'd better say  
it behind my back. Johnson! On  
with the show. Let's go!

The crowd yells its approval. He starts to walk away, but then, he speaks to the other drunk.

HENRY  
And why are you staring at my  
nose?

SECOND DRUNK  
I...I...I was really careful not  
to look.

HENRY  
Really? Why?

SECOND DRUNK  
Well..uh....

HENRY  
Does it's color bother you?

SECOND DRUNK  
No.

HENRY  
It's not running, is it?

SECOND DRUNK  
No.

HENRY  
Well, let's see...what could it  
be? Oh, wait a minute! Maybe  
it could be that you find it a  
trifle large?

SECOND DRUNK  
No! No! It's small! Real small!

HENRY

Small?! Did you hear that! I have a small nose! That's funny, I thought I had a big, huge, overwhelming nose! Look at your face. It's flat. It has no really good things sticking out of it like a really big nose.

SECOND DRUNK

(a complete chicken)

I'll try; I really will....

HENRY

Try what?

SECOND DRUNK

(flustered)

Try to...to...get a bigger  
...nose.

HENRY

Well then go on your quest, and don't come back till you have a nice big pink one!

Henry leaps upon a table and grabs from a wall display of crossed skis, a SKI POLE. Henry dubs him with the it on each shoulder. The crowd laughs again.

SECOND DRUNK

(flustered)

Thank you...sire.

The crowd laughs uproarously as the drunk runs out.

INT. OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT

The show is over and everyone has gone home. Dixie, Ernie and Henry sit at a table laughing their heads off. Dixie has a bottle of wine and some glasses and she pours for everyone.

HENRY

(kidding)

I'm so shocked at my behavior!

ERNIE

(offering the wine)

Have a little of this.

HENRY

I shall.

He takes a swig.

DIXIE

(excited)

How do you do it?

HENRY

What?

DIXIE

You know, make that stuff up?

HENRY

Make it up? I've been rehearsing in my head for years.

(then, obliquely)

You know, as long as I live I'll never figure out how they do it.

ERNIE

Do what?

HENRY

You know those maps around town that say "you are here?"

DIXIE

Yeah.

HENRY

How do they know?

DIXIE

Know what?

HENRY

Where I am. Every time I go up to one, it says "you are here," and it's always right! It knows exactly where I am at all times.

Dixie and Ernie smile at each other. Henry's trying to entertain them.

DIXIE

God, you were great tonight.  
Everyone was here.

ERNIE

Even your new fireman was here.

DIXIE

Roxanne was here even.



HENRY  
(surprised)  
Roxanne? Roxanne was here?

DIXIE  
Yeah...We saw her today and told  
her she should come to the...

Dixie grinds to a halt as she watches Henry go almost into a  
trance.

DIXIE  
(continuing)  
...show.

ERNIE  
Boy, she seemed different today.

DIXIE  
Remember her husband from last  
summer? That bearded thing from  
hell? They split up.  
(then)  
You know Roxanne don't you,  
Henry?

HENRY  
I met her once. Ran into her a  
couple of times.

DIXIE  
Do you like her?

HENRY  
Well...hey...what's not to like?

DIXIE  
Why don't you say something?  
She needs something to brighten  
her up a little. Ask her out.  
You never go out with women.  
(then)  
You're not gay are you?

HENRY  
God, I wish I could be. I could  
have a little gay baby.

DIXIE  
So take Roxanne to a movie or  
something. She'd like someone  
like you.

HENRY  
Sorry, I don't think about  
things like that.

DIXIE

Just a movie...

HENRY

I've had enough experience to know not to try to get close to women. There's always that moment that embarrasses both of us, where she has to say, "No Henry, I like you but..."

There is a silence. Then Dixie speaks gently.

DIXIE

Henry, then why don't you get a nose job?

HENRY

I did.

They smile.

HENRY

(continuing)

I just keep thinking that I was born with this nose for a reason. There's got to be a reason. Don't you think?

DIXIE

Well, maybe some cosmetics, you know, a little shading or something.

HENRY

No. I'll just stay the way I am. I don't care that much. Besides, the word is so terrible: Rhinoplasty. It has the same pleasant ring as "hemorrhoid."

DIXIE

You know, Henry. I saw her tonight. She was watching you. She had his look on her face. I think she was interested in you.

HENRY

She was?

A woman approaches. It's Sandy, who was with Roxanne at the town hall. She goes over to the bartender.

BARTENDER  
Ten more minutes, baby. I'm  
almost through.

SANDY  
Ok.

She notices Henry and his group.

SANDY  
(continuing)  
Hi.

EVERYBODY  
Hi, Sandy.

SANDY  
(to Henry)  
God, you were great tonight.

HENRY  
Thank you.

SANDY  
Roxanne went on and on about  
you.

HENRY  
She did?

SANDY  
Yeah.  
(then)  
It was a big night for Roxanne.  
I think she fell in love, she  
just doesn't know it yet.

BARTENDER  
Hey Sandy, let's go.

SANDY  
Ok. I'll see you.

EVERYBODY  
So long...etc.

She heads for the door.

HENRY  
What did she mean "she thinks  
she fell in love?"

DIXIE  
(kidding him)  
Oh, she's probably just interested in you sexually.

HENRY  
(equally kidding,  
making a  
funny voice)  
Ee-yew. That would be terrible!

They all laugh -- and toast.

INT. MAYOR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

We are in the dining room at the Mayor's house, a lush Victorian extravaganza, situated at the bottom of a steep road. The Mayor is with RALSTON (the Chief of Police).

RALSTON  
...and then evidently one of them got excited and threw a beer bottle and Henry got a little upset.

MAYOR BLACK  
Did they hurt him?.

RALSTON  
Uh...no. It was sort of the other way around...

RALSTON  
(continuing,  
enjoying)  
...Ha! You shoulda seen 'em. Henry was really...

The Mayor glares at him.

MAYOR BLACK  
Henry's trouble for us. What's the department like now?

RALSTON  
You don't have to worry about them. There's only three pros. Henry, Johnson and some new guy.

MAYOR BLACK  
Too many pros.

The Mayor's wife, DOROTHY, enters with coffee.

DOROTHY

Coffee?

MAYOR BLACK

Thanks honey.

RALSTON

Do you have any decaf?

DOROTHY

(exasperated)

I'll fix it.

She leaves.

RALSTON

Look, I'll take Henry out for a while. Like a broke leg or something. That'll leave only one pro, four volunteers and the new guy.

MAYOR

What are these volunteers like?

RALSTON

(to the Mayor)

Don't worry. he had to scrape the bottom of the barrel to get them.

EXT. FIRE STATION - DAY

We see a cheerfully quaint, old-fashioned fire station. We see a sign out front that reads, "Aspen Fire Department." There is, however, a fireman, BORIS, on a ladder, starting to nail up the letters for the word Volunteer after the word Aspen. There is another fireman, ANDY, standing out talking to him.

BORIS

Hey Andy, is volunteer spelled v-o-l-i-n-t-u-a-r...or v-o-l-a-n-u-t-u-n-a-r...?

ANDY

(stuck)

Uh...let's see, v-o-l-...  
uh...why don't you just abbreviate it, v-o-l, period?

BORIS

But that's the abbreviation for volume. They might think it's the Aspen volume fire department.

ANDY

Only an idiot would think that.

BORIS

Okay.

He tacks up a final period on VOL. A third fireman, DEAN, walks out of the firehouse.

DEAN

Hey, what's the Aspen volume  
fire department mean?

INT. FIRE STATION - UPSTAIRS - DAY

Henry, sitting in the upstairs office and changing room, looks out the window at the scene.

HENRY

God. And to think we have a  
volunteer army.

INT. FIRE STATION - TRUCK ROOM - DAY

There are four volunteer firemen altogether. ANDY, BIFF, DEAN, and BORIS. They're brawny, and loyal to be sure, but thank God Henry and Johnson are around, the only paid, professional fire-fighters (soon to be joined by Chris). The four men are alone downstairs. Biff is carrying a bunch of oily rags.

BIFF

Andy, what should I do with  
these.

ANDY

Oily rags are very dangerous.  
You can't even throw them away.  
We should burn them.

BIFF

Where?

ANDY

Do it in the trash can.

They drop the rags in a can and Andy throws in a match. There is a small blaze. From the front window, Dean calls them.

DEAN

Rita alert!

All the firemen rush to the front to watch RITA, a particularly bouncy female, strut passed the station. She sees them and walks toward them.

RITA

(sexily)

Hi boys. Guess what. I'm  
having a sale.

We hear suddenly from inside the station:

HENRY (V.O.)

Jesus Christ!

Inside the station we see that the blaze in the trash can has started to climb up the wall of the fire station. Henry already has an extinguisher trained on it and is putting it out. He then turns to the embarrassed firemen.

HENRY

Goddamn it! We're supposed to  
put them out! Not start them!

The men stand sheepishly before him.

HENRY

(continuing,  
angry)

Look, I have a dream. It's not  
a big dream. Just a little one.  
My dream, and I hope you won't  
find this too crazy, is to have  
a fire department that can  
actually put out a goddamn fire!  
I would like the people in this  
community to feel that if,  
God-forbid, there was a fire,  
that calling the fire department  
would actually be a wise thing  
to do! You can't have people  
saying as their houses are  
burning down, "Whatever you do,  
don't call the fire department!"  
Thank God we are expecting  
another experienced fireman.  
When he comes, please treat him  
with respect, as he might keep  
you from burning down the  
station!

He storms out. The men stand silently, then:

BIFF

Boy, he needs a relax-o pill.

EXT. STREET - DAY

We are outside the Outpost Bookshop. Chris exits carrying a

small package. Roxanne, walking with Sandy, observes him coming out. She and Sandy, walk over to the store.

INT. BOOKSTORE - DAY

Sandy talks to the female clerk.

SANDY  
(asking for Roxanne)  
Hey, Susan. Who was that guy  
that was just in here?



SUSAN

He said he was with the fire department and picked up some book.

SANDY

(to Roxanne)

There you go. He must be new.

ROXANNE

(to Susan)

What book did he get?

SUSAN

Are you guys with Sixty Minutes?

(looking it up)

It was..."The Visitations of Halley's Comet, by...

ROXANNE

(stunned)

That's my book.

SANDY

(laughing)

Oh my God, Roxanne. He reads you!

ROXANNE

I'm just happy that he reads.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Roxanne sits at a cafe with Gertie and Sandy. Gertie reads the latest edition of "The Aspen Times."

SANDY

(biting into a burger)

I love this thing.

GERTIE

All that grease will make it a very short trip through your body. Did you read Aunt Shirley today? Listen to this, "The Wombat is paid a dollar a year and earns every penny of it."

They all laugh. Roxanne keeps her secret.

SANDY

I don't get it.

GERTIE

Who the hell writes this? It's funny.

ROXANNE

What's the point?

SANDY

Excuse me?

ROXANNE

What's the point of meeting this guy? What if he's a jerk?

GERTIE

Who?

ROXANNE

This guy...from last night.

SANDY

(to Gertie)

She's never going to meet anyone ever again because they might be a jerk.

(continuing,  
to Roxanne)

So he's a jerk! You get rid of him!...I mean after you fuck him for a couple of weeks.

GERTIE

I'm shocked.

ROXANNE

You haven't been shocked since 1919.

GERTIE

Don't look now but a viking just came in.

SANDY

Jesus, it's him.

ANGLE ON THE DOOR

Chris entering for lunch. Almost immediately he spots Roxanne. Turning three shades of red, he ducks into the men's room.

ANGLE ON ROXANNE'S TABLE

SANDY

He should be bronzed. Roxanne, it's now or never.

ROXANNE

Oh Sandy.

GERTIE

Do it Roxanne. He might be that comet you're looking for! What difference does it make?

ROXANNE

I...I guess it doesn't make any. I'll go talk to him when he comes out. I'll invite him for an Aspen tradition of hot-tubbing.

They laugh.

INT. RESTROOM - DAY

Chris is inside, standing nervously. He turns on the faucet to wash his hands, but turns them a little too hard. The water SPLASHES UP ON HIS TROUSERS in a most conspicuous place, leaving a large embarrassing stain. Chris is horrified. He tries to remove the stain with a towel -- no luck.

ANGLE ON ROXANNE'S TABLE

The three women watch the door.

ANGLE ON CHRIS

He remains in the men's room frozen with fear.

DISSOLVE

Time passes as the women watch the door and finish their meals.

ANGLE ON RESTROOM DOOR

A man enters the restroom.

ANGLE INSIDE THE RESTROOM

We see Chris, STANDING ON TOP OF THE SINK, holding his crotch next to the warm-air hand dryer. Chris shamefully gets down, trying to explain himself to the other man.

MAN

We don't go for that here.

ANGLE ON ROXANNE'S TABLE

The girls have finished their food and have paid the check. Chris has not yet appeared out of the restroom. We get the idea that a lengthy amount of time has passed.

ROXANNE

Oh well.

They get up to leave.

ANGLE INSIDE RESTROOM

The restroom window has been opened and the bathroom is empty.

INT. FIRE STATION - DAY

The men are playing an improvised paper-wad basketball game. Chris appears at the entrance, peering in shyly.

CHRIS

Hello?

DEAN

Yeah?

CHRIS

I'm the new fireman.

The men eye each other. They're not wild about seeing the new "pro." They put on a huge front.

ANDY

Welcome! Welcome to our little  
fire station!

They ad lib introductions.

CHRIS

Thanks.

BIFF

(noticing his pants)  
Hey, great stain! You can take  
your stuff upstairs. I'll show  
you where the shirts are.

He takes him up the stairs and they are gone. Boris looks at the two remaining firemen.

BORIS

Exploding dogs?

They nod affirmatively.

INT. FIRE STATION - UPSTAIRS - DAY

Boris enters where Biff is showing Chris his locker. He is very excited.

BORIS  
Biff, we've got exploding dogs  
over at the hardware store.

BIFF  
Jesus Christ!

CHRIS  
Exploding dogs?

BORIS  
(to Biff)  
About six of Jasper's dogs drank  
kerosene. They're exploding  
like crazy.

Boris and Biff get very excited and start to race down the stairs.

CHRIS  
That's impossible...

BORIS  
Well, we can handle it without  
you.

Chris gets swept up in the quickened pace of the station.

CHRIS  
No...I'm coming.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

Henry is in the cosmetic section of a small department store. He is nervous as he talks to a female clerk.

HENRY  
Hi.

CLERK  
Hi, Henry. Can I help you?

HENRY  
Yes. I have a friend who is  
looking for...uh...a cosmetic,  
or wondering if one exists,  
that's sort of a shading type  
thing.

CLERK

We have lots of blushes and things. What specifically is it for?

HENRY

Well, she has a feature on her face she wants to...de-emphasize.

The clerk stares at him.

HENRY

(continuing)

She has very large...cheeks.

CLERK

(knowing)

I see, she has very large cheeks and is looking for something that might make them look smaller.

HENRY

Exactly.

CLERK

I think a dark blush would be fine.

HENRY

Great. How would she go about, you know, applying it.

CLERK

She would just shade the area of the...you know...cheek, to make it appear that there were more shadows and less actual acreage ...I mean area.

HENRY

Great. Great. I'll take it.

CLERK

Let me go get a fresh one from the back.

She exits to the back room. Henry stands nervously. He notices one of those changing rooms where you can see a person's feet behind the door. We see a SKIRT DROP over some lovely legs and some jeans being tried on. Henry tries not to watch but is unsuccessful. The woman emerges from the booth, zipping up her fly. It is Roxanne. And she notices Henry instantly, and walks over to him.

ROXANNE

Hey Henry! God, I want to see you! You were great last night, really. I was going to come over but I got swept away. What are you doing at the cosmetics counter? Got a girlfriend?

HENRY

I'm...I'm...I'm...

The clerk comes back.

CLERK

Here's your blush.

HENRY

Uh, yes. Could you gift wrap it?

CLERK

Uh, sure.

She exits.

HENRY

(to Roxanne)

For my sister.

ROXANNE

You never said you had a sister.

HENRY

Well, I don't. It's really for uh, my sister's girlfriend.

At that moment, Gertie emerges from one of the clothing booths wearing a flashy punk style outfit. She looks outrageous. Roxanne flashes a huge grin and rushes over to her.

ROXANNE

Gertie! It's fabulous.

GERTIE

(admiring herself)

I don't look too absolutely stunning do I?

ROXANNE

Almost. Almost.

GERTIE

I'll wear it to bridge. Stir up the old bitties. I'm so sick of

'em. All they do is sit around  
analyze farts.

Henry and Roxanne burst out laughing. But suddenly, Roxanne gets nervous and serious and speaks intimately to Henry.

ROXANNE

Can I see you?

HENRY

Sure.

ROXANNE

Outside?

HENRY

Yeah.

ROXANNE

Let me take care of Gertie. Be  
about ten minutes.

HENRY

Okay.

ROXANNE

Come on Gertie. Let's get  
going.

EXT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

The firemen connect a hose to a hydrant and hand it to Chris.  
There is lots of activity, with the firemen racing everywhere.

DEAN

Just stay here. If you see a  
dog come out, just keep the hose  
trained on him in case it  
explodes.

CHRIS

(bewildered)

Ok.

The firemen race inside.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Inside, the firemen are laughing their heads off, although they are trying to be quiet. There is a dog inside, and they hustle him out the door to the waiting Chris.



EXT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

The dog ambles out the door and sits down about ten feet in front of the waiting Chris, who trains his hose on the dog. The dog stares at Chris; Chris stares at the dog.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

The four firemen escape out the back and head back to the station.

INT. FIRE STATION - DAY

The firemen enter, laughing uncontrollably.

EXT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Chris still trains the hose on the dog. Finally, the small crowd watching him bursts into laughter. Chris catches on that he's been had.

EXT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

Henry waits on the street. Roxanne and Gertie exit from the department store. Gertie is wearing her punk outfit. They approach Henry. Gertie, sensing an awkward silence, excuses herself.

GERTIE

Bye.

Roxanne and Henry are left alone. They turn and walk down a tree-lined street.

ROXANNE

What I'm going to say is a little forward.

Henry looks at her, then she speaks.

ROXANNE

(continuing)

There's someone I think I should get to know better.

HENRY

(filled with anticipation)

Yes...

ROXANNE

Someone who I think likes me, too. You know what I mean?

HENRY

Yes...

ROXANNE

But I think he's afraid to talk to me...I can see him trying. I like him for that.

HENRY

Maybe he needs you to make the first move.

ROXANNE

That's why I'm talking to you.

HENRY

(convinced it's  
he)

Well. And what else do you know about him?

ROXANNE

All I know is he's interesting, mysterious...

Henry gets more carried away with each adjective.

ROXANNE

(continuing)  
...handsome.

HENRY

(stopped dead)  
He's what?

ROXANNE

Handsome.

HENRY

Oh.

ROXANNE

What's the matter?

HENRY

Nothing. It's just great that he's all these things.

ROXANNE

I've only seen him twice.

HENRY

You never spoke to each other?

ROXANNE

Never. We just exchanged a couple of goofy looks.

HENRY

So why are you telling me this?

ROXANNE

Because he works for you. His name is Chris Macconnel.

HENRY

...Doesn't work for me.

ROXANNE

He's new today. I asked about him.

HENRY

Oh yeah, there is a new guy coming. What can I do?

ROXANNE

Well, he's pathologically shy. And since you're going to be working with him, I thought you could encourage him. Not too much, just enough.

He thinks about this a long while.

ROXANNE

(continuing)

If he's as shy as I think he is, he might not say anything all summer, and then I'll be gone.

HENRY

Well, if it comes up.

ROXANNE

Thanks, Henry. I know I'm forward.

(she kisses him  
on the cheek)

You were great last night. It was the first time I've ever seen anyone actually be brave.

HENRY

(in his kidding  
voice)

Listen, I've been a lot braver since then.

INT. FIRE STATION - DAY

Chris charges into the station and confronts the four firemen. Rita, the bouncy redhead, is with them. Suddenly, Chris enters, steaming, and faces the firemen.

CHRIS

Why'd you do it?

The firemen are a little contrite and embarrassed.

ANDY

(approaching)

Hey, you were a great sport.

CHRIS

(angry)

Why'd you do it?

He grabs Andy by the collar, threateningly.

ANDY

Hey, take it up with the chief.  
It was his idea.

CHRIS

Why?

ANDY

He's a funny guy. Thinks this  
is funny, you know, a kidder.

Angry, Chris he runs up the stairs to the lockers.

BIFF

What'd you tell him it was Henry  
for?

ANDY

Shit, he woulda killed me. The  
chief can handle him.

BIFF

(continuing,  
to Rita)

How much to dance for us right  
here?

RITA

Jesus. Twenty-two fifty.

BORIS

But we can go down to the club  
and see you for for five bucks  
and get a free drink.

RITA

Boys, this is up close and personal.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Henry is with a handsome doctor.

HENRY

This time I want to do it, Frank. Cut the thing off.

DOCTOR

Henry, you know I can't.

HENRY

You've got to.

DOCTOR

Henry, you can't. You know that. You've been in comas before. Allergies to anesthetics are very serious.

HENRY

So we do it without the anesthetic.

DOCTOR

That's impossible. The pain would be unbearable. You'd go into shock.

HENRY

So what's a little shock?

DOCTOR

(sitting down, man to man.)

You know, Henry, all these things against you -- maybe you were born with the nose for a reason.

HENRY

You mean like opening coke bottles?

DOCTOR

Maybe it's some sort of a test.

HENRY

I don't want a test.

He puts his face in his hands. However, his nose gets slightly in the way.

HENRY  
Frank, could I look at the nose  
cards one more time?

DOCTOR  
(sympathetically)  
Sure.

He hands Henry a stack of cards, each one graphically showing different types of perfect noses. Henry holds one at a time up to his face, swooning over them like a kid in a candy store.

HENRY  
(handing it back)  
Thanks.

INT. FIRE STATION - UPSTAIRS - DAY

Johnson is upstairs in the changing room with Chris.

JOHNSON  
Don't mind these guys. They're  
all new. They still think it's  
like a big fraternity party.

CHRIS  
Don't worry, I know whose idea  
it was, they told me.

JOHNSON  
Well anyway, welcome.

He starts to leave, then:

JOHNSON  
(continuing)  
Listen, it could have been  
worse.

CHRIS  
How?

JOHNSON  
Well, a lot of ways. They could  
have got you on the chief's  
nose.

CHRIS  
What do you mean?

JOHNSON

They could have set you up to  
joke about the chief's nose.

CHRIS

So?

JOHNSON

Well, we don't talk about it.

CHRIS

Why don't we talk about his --

JOHNSON

(cutting him  
off)

No! We don't even say the word.  
To breathe it is to have to deal  
with him! I've seen him crush  
guys whose tone of voice sug-  
gested...

(taps his nose  
and mouths  
the word)

Just mention anything long in  
the general vicinity of nose,  
and...

CHRIS

Anything?

JOHNSON

Not even a sneeze, or --  
(throat cutting  
gesture)  
-- eeecchhhh.

EXT. FIRE STATION - DAY

There is the sound of tinny music emerging from the station.  
We see Biff peering down the street. He spots Henry walking  
toward the station. He quickly calls inside.

BIFF

It's the chief!

We hear scurrying sounds inside.

INT. FIRE STATION - DAY

Moments later. Henry enters the station. The men are working  
diligently. Too diligently. Henry is pleased, however, to see  
the men working. The tinny music still plays.

HENRY

Hi.

MEN

(nervously, in  
unison)

Hi.

This stops Henry. Something's too right. He looks over at the men, then walks over to a downstairs locker. He speaks to the locker.

HENRY

(to locker)

Rita?

RITA

(from inside  
locker)

Yes.

HENRY

Whatever they're paying you, you  
may keep.

RITA

Thank you.

HENRY

You may come out now.

RITA

Thank you.

She comes out, bare-breasted, and walks over to her top. She puts it on and picks up her portable cassette player and leaves.

RITA

(continuing)

Bye.

Silence. Henry stares miserably at his men. They all look down at their feet.

HENRY

As you know, several days ago,  
we became, with the exception of  
three permanent employees, an  
all-volunteer fire department.  
You are those volunteers.  
Because I know you all have  
regular jobs you must take care  
of, I have not pushed you too  
hard. I expected certain



shortcomings at first, certain lapses in skills, but I knew in time that you would learn what it means to be a fire-fighter. That time has now come. You are going to become firemen.

Behind Henry, on the stairwell, Chris appears.

HENRY

(continuing)

One of the first no-nos of being a fire-fighter, is to avoid, whenever possible, having topless dancers in the hose lockers! We are going to study this and other rules until they are as plain...

CHRIS

...as the nose on your face.

Boom! Henry's face reddens. He turns and looks at Chris. Henry is about to kill.

HENRY

(walking toward  
him, steaming)

Who do you think you are?

BIFF

He's new. He came today.

DEAN

Chris Macconnel.

Henry recognizes the name, and pulls himself up short.

HENRY

Oh. Oh. I see. Well, how do you do.

They nod at each other.

HENRY

I think all people here should start off as friends. So I will just simply continue.

He turns back to the men.

HENRY

(continuing)

There will be mandatory drills each day. Until each aspect of fire-fighting is coming out of your...

CHRIS

...nose.

Again Henry turns to Chris, seething.

HENRY

...ears, coming out of your ears.

The men look at each other bewildered, scared. Henry now looks at Chris, almost challenging.

HENRY

(continuing,  
clinchd teeth)

And once you have become competent firemen, you will feel a pride that you have never felt. You will have respect. You will be able to walk down the street with your...

CHRIS

Nose in the air.

That's it. Henry explodes!

HENRY

Goddamn it! Everyone get out of here. Leave me alone with him!

The firemen fall all over each other to get outside.

ANDY

He's going to kill him.

BORIS

There won't be anything left of him.

DEAN

Call an ambulance.

Once outside, they peer through the window. Henry and Chris are alone.

HENRY

Hi.

CHRIS  
Hi?!! What about the exploding  
dogs?!!

HENRY  
(stares at him)  
Exploding dogs?

CHRIS  
Yes, the exploding dogs!

HENRY  
What the hell are you talking  
about?

CHRIS  
Oh come on. You know I was  
standing in the street with a  
hose ready to put out a dog in  
case it exploded.

HENRY  
You were? Well, it looks like  
you're going to fit right in  
around here.

CHRIS  
They told me it was your idea.

HENRY  
Don't be stupid. I wouldn't do  
that.

(changing the  
subject)  
Look, I'm a friend of hers.

CHRIS  
A friend of whose?

HENRY  
Roxanne.

CHRIS  
You're a friend of Roxanne?

HENRY  
Yes.

CHRIS  
Did she say something about me?

HENRY  
The tiniest mention in passing.

CHRIS

Gee. Oh God, I'm sorry for those things I said.

HENRY

I don't accept but I'll let it go. So anyway. She seemed to be mildly curious about you so I thought I'd mention it.

CHRIS

(remorseful)

I may as well forget it anyway. Look, I'm really sorry I said those things.

He turns and starts to go upstairs. Henry can't believe it.

HENRY

Wait a minute. I'm curious. Why forget it?

CHRIS

I don't know how to talk to women. See, I get nervous.

HENRY

Well, we all get nervous.

CHRIS

No. I get sort of pathologically nervous. Besides, I heard her say she wanted someone intelligent. I hear about war in the Middle East, and I don't even know where the Middle East is. I just know it's in the east, around the middle.

CHRIS

(continuing)

For two years I pronounced "anxiety," "an-ex-ity." However, I ski great.

HENRY

You handled me all right.

CHRIS

Oh, I can pick a fight. That's easy. But put me in front of a woman, I say dumb things. I fall apart.

HENRY

Funny. I think I could talk to a woman pretty well.

CHRIS

If only I knew what to say to a woman like her.

HENRY

If only I were a handsome little fireman.

There is a pause. They both reflect on what has been said, on their desires. Then Henry speaks.

HENRY

(continuing)

Maybe you could write her a letter?

CHRIS

Huh?

HENRY

Write her a letter. That's what I'd do. Tell her how you feel. That way you'll get to talk to her without being nervous.

CHRIS

I don't know how to write something like that.

HENRY

(getting  
frustrated)

Well, just make it up! God! You've got an opportunity to say something to a woman who actually wants to hear you!

CHRIS

(tentatively)

What should I say?

HENRY

Just tell her how you feel. Be honest. She'll know that you're sincere.

CHRIS

Well, I'll try it. Thanks, Henry.

They shake hands.

EXT. FIRE STATION - DAY

The firemen are outside the window looking in at the scene.

BIFF

Look...I guess it's okay to talk  
about his nose. That guy really  
handled him.

Henry and Chris open the doors to let everyone in. The fireman  
approaches Henry.

ANDY

Do I smell smoke...? You ought  
to know better than any of us.

Henry picks him up and hurls him across the room.

INT. STATIONERY STORE - DAY

Chris is buying supplies. We get the feeling he has never been  
in a stationery store in his life.

CHRIS

I would like to buy a pencil.

CLERK

Yes sir. Anything else?

CHRIS

Uh, yes. A piece of paper.

CLERK

A piece of paper? Just one?

CHRIS

Better make it two.

CLERK

Ok. A pencil and two pieces of  
paper.

CHRIS

And I'll buy an envelope too.

The clerk hands over the goods and watches curiously as Chris  
departs.

INT. CHRIS' APT. - DAY

Chris' apartment is the regular tacky condo, but with a pleas-  
ant view to keep it from being depressing. Chris sits by the  
window struggling with his letter. The sweat on his brow tells  
us he is not doing too well.

INT. STATIONERY STORE - DAY

Chris is at the stationery store again.

CHRIS

I'd like more paper, maybe ten sheets, and a pencil sharpener.

CLERK

Ten sheets of paper, comin' up!

INT. HENRY'S APT. - NIGHT

Henry is in his bed, asleep. The phone rings. It's one a.m.

HENRY

Hello? Sure Chris, I was just making some eggs.

LATER

Chris is in Henry's room, showing him his letter.

CHRIS

I thought I better show it to you before I send it.

HENRY

(reading aloud)

"Dear Roxanne, how's it going? Want to have a drink sometime? If you do, check this box."

(turning to  
Chris)

How long did you work on this?

CHRIS

Since noon.

HENRY

Chris, that is a very long time.

Henry walks around to a chair and sits. He looks at the pathetic, hopeful Chris. There is a long deliberation.

HENRY

(continuing)

Look, do it like this.

He takes out a pen and paper.

HENRY

(continuing)

How do you feel about her?

CHRIS

Me? About her?

A look of exasperation crosses Henry's face.

HENRY

Yes. How did you feel when you first saw her?

CHRIS

Horny.

HENRY

Ok. But you can't write, "I felt horny when I first saw you." Say, "I felt moved, alive, on fire..."

Henry writes it on the paper.

HENRY

(continuing)

Now, how did you feel when you first tried to speak to her?

CHRIS

Like a fuckin' idiot.

HENRY

Ok. But instead of saying, "I felt like a fuckin' idiot," let's say, "I felt like a child, standing in the sun for the first time, unable to form words, feeling only a radiance.

He writes that down on the paper.

HENRY

And what did you do after you saw her?

CHRIS

I barfed.

HENRY

Hmmmm. "After seeing you, my only nourishment was you.

CHRIS

Henry. You write the letter. Please.



HENRY

Come on, you can do it.

CHRIS

No, you know what to say. You know how to say the things I feel. You write it, I'll sign it.

HENRY

That's lying.

CHRIS

Not if you write what I feel. I'll just sign my name. You write to Roxanne what you would imagine I'm feeling.

HENRY

(considering  
it.)

What I would imagine you're feeling?

CHRIS

Yes.

He deliberates a long time, and pours some wine.

DISSOLVE TO:

Later that night. Henry, alone, works on the letter.

EXT. ROXANNE'S HOUSE - DAY

We are outside her rented Victorian. Roxanne is at the mailbox and takes out the letter Chris has delivered to her. She reads it as she walks to the house and we can see her take halting steps as the letter intrigues her. A smile crosses her face.

INT. FIRE STATION - DAY

Henry is upstairs alone when Chris bursts in. He is holding a letter.

CHRIS

It worked.

HENRY

What?

CHRIS

The letter worked. She wrote me back.

HENRY

(flattered)

She wrote you back? What did she say?

CHRIS

That, that she was impressed by the letter. You know, about getting one. She said she thought I must be very special!

HENRY

Let's see it.

He gives him the letter and Henry reads it silently, moved, as though the letter were to him.

HENRY

Wow.

CHRIS

She says she wants me to write her again.

HENRY

I saw.

CHRIS

You gotta write another one for me.

HENRY

No, no.

CHRIS

You've got to!

HENRY

NO!

The phone rings and Henry answers it.

HENRY

(continuing)

Hello? Sure Clara. I'll come right out.

(hangs up)

Got a cat up a tree. Want to go with me?

CHRIS

What about the letter?

HENRY

(snaps his fingers)  
This is a great time to test the  
four stooges.

He sounds the alarm, a siren at the top of the fire house that  
one can hear anywhere in town.

FOUR QUICK CUTS:

In the middle of waiting on a customer, ANDY'S head pops up.

On a construction site, BIFF'S head looks up at the siren.

Getting in his car, DEAN'S head jerks toward the alarm.

BORIS, about to bite into a sandwich, drops everything and runs  
outside.

INTERCUT:

The four diligent men racing toward the fire station.

EXT. FIRE STATION - DAY

The four men arrive hastily at the station. Henry cuts the  
alarm.

HENRY

Very good. Six and a half  
minutes. We've got a cat up a  
tree at Clara Pollard's house.  
Get over there and get it down!

BORIS

A cat up a tree? I was eating!

HENRY

Listen, it could be you up  
there.

BORIS

I'm a human. I wouldn't be up a  
tree. This is only a cat.

HENRY

(chastising him)  
Only a cat. Only a cat. A cute  
little bundle of meowing fluff.  
What have you got against  
Snowball?

BORIS

Who's Snowball?

HENRY

Mrs. Pollard's cat. You have a cat, don't you Boris? What's its name?

BORIS

Puff.

HENRY

Well, this time it's Snowball up there. But one day it could be Puff. Don't you see? It doesn't matter who's up there. Puff, Snowball, or Puss-puss. That's what firemen are all about! Now go! And get into full gear.

They get the truck rolling while putting on their gear.

EXT. STREET - DAY

We see a CLOSE-UP of a cat in a tree. THE CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal two firemen in the tree, one of them Boris, in full uniform, crawling toward the cat, one fireman hobbling around the ground with a sprained ankle, and another trying to get the ladder to extend. It's a real vision of ineptitude.

ANOTHER ANGLE

HENRY comes strolling around the corner, sees the sight and tries not to wince. He walks up to the tree and OPENS A CAN OF CATFOOD while staring glumly at the men. He sets the can down and we WATCH THE CAT work its way down the tree to it. Henry turns away and walks back down the street, shaking his head.

INT. SAMUELS' CAFE - DAY

Henry sits talking to Dixie.

HENRY

I don't know what I'm going to do with these guys. I've got to drill them more but it's tough because they all have jobs.

DIXIE

They're trying, anyway.

HENRY

Yeah, but, you should have seen them. Two were stuck in the tree, Andy finally got the ladder up...

DIXIE  
What'd you do?

HENRY  
I told them to take the truck  
back to the station and meet me  
there in thirty minutes...

A look of panic crosses Henry's face.

HENRY  
(continuing)  
Oh God.

DIXIE  
What is it?

HENRY  
They're taking the truck back.

DIXIE  
So?

HENRY  
The ladder's still up!

He RUNS from the cafe. We hear, offscreen, a CRUNCHING SOUND.

EXT. FIRE STATION - DAY

Henry approaches the station. We see on his face a look of  
hopeless exasperation.

ANGLE ON THE STATION

The truck is inside the station. The ladder, still attached to  
the truck, is STICKING OUT THROUGH AN UPSTAIRS WINDOW. Henry  
approaches Andy.

HENRY  
How did this happen?

ANDY  
I'm not really sure.

HENRY  
Let's have a meeting.

INT. FIRE STATION - DAY

The men are lined up; Henry faces them.

HENRY

Gentlemen, we have to get it together. I know it's difficult to find time to drill because you're all working and I respect that. But if we could just spend an hour a day...I know you'd like to be home by six so if we could meet one hour before six I'd appreciate it.

Biff raises his hand.

BIFF

Problem. I don't get off till five.

HENRY

Yeah?

BIFF

So I couldn't get here till five and you want me an hour before...

(realizes it's the same)

Oh.

He steps back into line.

HENRY

We'll start tomorrow.

HENRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Henry is alone in his apartment, opening the gift-wrapped box of blush he bought earlier that week. He experiments with it in front of a mirror but gives up quickly. He gets the parakeet from the cage and sets it on his nose. Sitting and sipping from a glass of wine, he spots Roxanne's letter jutting from the pocket of his coat. Surprised that he has it, he sits down at his desk and rereads it. Swept up in the letter, he STARTS TO WRITE an answer.

EXT. FIRE STATION - DAY

Henry is out back, drilling the men. They stand at something close to attention.

HENRY

All right, crawl!

ANDY

Could I ask approximately how long we will be crawling for?

HENRY

You will crawl until I tell you  
to stop crawling.

They flop down on their bellies and begin to crawl. Chris  
shows up in the background. Henry spots him, and walks over.

HENRY

I wrote your letter. Just sign  
your name to it. Try to copy my  
handwriting.

CHRIS

You did? Jeez, thank you. You  
seemed so determined not to.

HENRY

Well, I just, you know, felt,  
uh, you know.

CHRIS

Well, thanks anyway.

HENRY

That's okay.

(a pause)

Let me know what she thinks of  
it.

CHRIS

Sure.

He turns back to the men. They are nowhere in sight. He  
hurries down the driveway and finds the men HALFWAY DOWN THE  
STREET.

INT. MAYOR'S HOUSE - DAY

The Mayor is being served dinner by his wife. She sets the  
food down and the doorbell rings.

DOROTHY

It's him. I know it's him.

MAYOR BLACK

Who.

DOROTHY

Ralston. He always pops in  
around dinner time. Always  
wants to eat.

Dorothy goes over to answer the door.

DOROTHY

(continuing)

...and something exotic too...If  
I've got coffee, he wants decaf.

She answers the door and addresses Ralston.

DOROTHY

Hi Ted...decaf?

RALSTON

Yeah, that's be great...Uh wait,  
do you have a cappucino?

She grits her teeth and starts to walk away.

DOROTHY

Sure...sure.

(muttering)

Cappucino...

RALSTON

Is the Wombat...I mean the Mayor  
in?

DOROTHY

He's in there.

He walks into the dining room.

MAYOR BLACK

What is it?

RALSTON

We've located a guy in Chicago.  
He supposed to be the best. He  
says if a place can burn for  
seventeen minutes uninterrupted,  
there'll be no trace.

MAYOR BLACK

How are our firemen doing?

RALSTON

Today they ripped a hydrant out  
of the ground.

MAYOR BLACK

How the hell do you rip a  
hydrant out of the ground?

RALSTON

They loaded one end of the hose  
on the truck and forgot to



disconnect it from the hydrant  
and drove off.

MAYOR BLACK  
Wouldn't the hose snap first?

RALSTON  
It did...afterwards. After the  
hydrant broke it hooked around a  
telephone pole. The hose  
snapped, whipped around, and  
killed Mrs. Curry's poodle.

MAYOR BLACK  
When will this guy be here?

RALSTON  
A week or so.

Dorothy enters with some food.

DOROTHY  
Would you like something; we've  
got cold pasta with ham in it.

RALSTON  
Oh that'd be great. Could you  
pick out the ham? I'm trying to  
cut down on meat. And maybe you  
could heat it up....Thanks.

EXT. ROXANNE'S HOUSE - DAY

Henry and Roxanne are unloading a twelve-inch telescope from  
the back of a stationwagon (a twelve-inch telescope is about a  
foot wide and three feet long, in other words, they're heavy).  
Although they puff and pant as they take it toward the house,  
Roxanne seems unusually glowing.

HENRY  
Thank God I have a counter-  
balance.

ROXANNE  
You can't be tired yet, Henry.  
We're going up three flights.

She looks up at the porch on top of the house.

HENRY  
That comet better turn hand-  
springs and sing when it gets  
here.

ROXANNE

This is not for the comet, this  
is for looking in bedrooms.

They laugh.

THE UPSTAIRS PORCH

They have hauled the telescope up three flights, and Roxanne skillfully sets it up, using a compass to orient it. Henry watches her.

HENRY

Where'd you learn to do this?

ROXANNE

They have these new amazing  
things called books.

HENRY

Oh yeah, I've heard of those.  
I'll have to get one.

ROXANNE

You have to be careful. I found  
out they come in different  
languages. If you get one  
that's not in English, you can  
really get stumped.

HENRY

I'll watch out for that.

She makes some final adjustments on the telescope.

ROXANNE

Henry, by the time that comet  
gets here, I have a feeling I'm  
going to be nuts, crazy, in  
love.

HENRY

With Chris?

She smiles a secret smile. She points the telescope at the sun, and holds a paper up to the small end of the scope. The sun is reflected as a disk on the paper.

ROXANNE

(continuing)

Here, you can see the sunspots.

They look at the reflected disk.

ROXANNE

(continuing)

You said something to Chris  
didn't you?

HENRY

A little.

ROXANNE

Well, thank you. What ever you  
said, it worked. It turns out  
he's more than I could have  
hoped for. He's written me  
letters, two of them.

HENRY

Were they nice?

ROXANNE

Nice? They were rhapsodies!  
He's bright, he's romantic,  
funny.

HENRY

Oh, come on.

ROXANNE

You think if a guy is good-  
looking he must be an idiot.

HENRY

So what does he talk about?

ROXANNE

Nothing. Everything. The  
mystery that draws one person to  
another.

HENRY

Sounds corny.

ROXANNE

Corny? No. Corny is being  
hailed out to a bar, offered a  
joint and trying to be shoved  
into bed because some half-back  
bought you dinner.

HENRY

I guess so. Then you find him  
interesting?

ROXANNE

I'm melting.

HENRY

So are you writing him back?

ROXANNE

I'm afraid!

(laughs  
at herself)

Can you believe it? I'm afraid  
he might not think I'm good  
enough or deep enough. When he  
writes, he shows a very deep,  
sexy side.

Henry's surprised and flattered at this.

HENRY

Really?

ROXANNE

Would you help me write him  
back?

Henry gets that "oh, no" look.

ROXANNE

(continuing)

I could write a letter and you  
could go over it with me.

HENRY

(stammering)

No, no...that's not a good idea.  
I wouldn't be good at it. I  
don't like to meddle in other  
people's business. That's one of  
my rules.

ROXANNE

Please?

HENRY

Just talk to him; that'd be good  
enough.

ROXANNE

(drops the idea)

I'm meeting him tonight, for the  
first time.

HENRY

Yes, I know.

ROXANNE

How did you know?

HENRY

He tells me things. Just me.

ROXANNE

What's he like?...No...don't tell me. I want him to unfold slowly. Please, don't tell him how I feel. Don't let him know how powerful he is.

She kisses him goodbye.

INT. FIRE STATION - NIGHT

Henry comes down the stairs and finds the men drilling with the hoses on the truck.

HENRY

Still here?

DEAN

We was a little embarrassed about today so we thought we could come in a couple of extra hours and practice.

HENRY

(pleased)  
Well. That's great. That's great. I'm going to take off. That's very good though.

He exits the station.

EXT. FIRE STATION - ALLEY - NIGHT

THREE CULPRITS lurk in the alley behind the fire station. They are equipped with pipes and chains, lying in wait for Henry.

FIRST THUG

(whispering)  
We don't kill him; we come close to it.

SECOND THUG

Shit.

EXT. FIRE STATION - NIGHT

Seconds later, Henry comes out of the fire station, going home for the night. He starts to walk past the alley, but his nose whiffs something -- the smell of the three dirty cut-throats in the alley.

HENRY  
(to himself)  
Something stinks.

ANOTHER ANGLE - FROM POV IN ALLEY

The three men watch Henry snap his fingers as if he forgot something, and turn back into the firehouse. Then, we see Henry reappear at the end of the alley, lighting up a cigarette. He leans up against the wall to smoke, so only his nose and the cigarette are visible to the three thugs. We hear Henry whistling.

WIDER ANGLE

FIRST THUG  
Let's go.

They bumble over each other as they sneak up on him. Finally they are within striking distance. They burst around the corner with their bludgeons drawn and discover -- nothing. Only a sausage taped to the wall (what appeared to be a nose), and a smoking cigarette. At that moment, the FIRE TRUCK ROLLS OUT OF THE FIRE STATION, loaded with the five men, with Henry on the running board, holding a BLASTING fire hose on the men, driving them back into the alley. We hear the CHEERS of the firemen.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Henry is walking home after his ambush. He comes to a street corner, stops, and turns back, overcome with curiosity about Roxanne's date. He walks toward Roxanne's house.

EXT. ROXANNE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Chris' car pulls up and he nervously approaches the door and knocks. Roxanne answers.

ROXANNE  
Hi.

CHRIS  
(nervous)  
Hi.

ROXANNE  
No letters this time, just face  
to face.

CHRIS  
Yeah.

ROXANNE

Want to sit outside?

CHRIS

Yeah, it's really, really  
...really...really nice out.

They sit on the veranda. There is an awkward pause.

ROXANNE

I love your letters.

CHRIS

Well, thanks.

ROXANNE

They're beautiful. Where did  
you learn to write like that?

CHRIS

Oh, you know. The usual places.

ROXANNE

They seem very extemporaneous.

CHRIS

(stumped, but flattered)  
Thank you.

ROXANNE

Say something.

CHRIS

Say something?

ROXANNE

You know, say something wonderful like in your letters.

CHRIS

(growing anxiety)  
Something wonderful?

ROXANNE

I would love it. To hear your  
voice speak the words you write.

CHRIS

Well, let's see. Uh...

ROXANNE

I know. Tell me what you think  
of the night.

CHRIS

It's....the night is...very...  
extemporaneous.

ROXANNE

What?

CHRIS

(nonplussed)

This is wild.

ROXANNE

Yes. Wild. The night is wild.  
Like love can be wild.

CHRIS

Love is wild. Wild and extem-  
poraneous.

ROXANNE

Yes. Say something romantic.

CHRIS

Don't go changin' to try and  
please me.

ROXANNE

Isn't that from a song?

CHRIS

Uh, yeah. It just kinda came to  
me.

ROXANNE

Use your own words.

CHRIS

(trying hard)

You...you have...you have a  
great...body.

Roxanne is stunned. Chris tries again.

CHRIS

(continuing)

Your...your breasts are like...  
are like...melons!

ROXANNE

What!?

CHRIS

Can I feel your breasts?



She rises in horror and backs toward the front door, almost crying in her disappointment.

ROXANNE

I have to go in now.

She runs in the house. Chris sits stunned on the front lawn. He makes one last call to her.

CHRIS

June, '83!

She stops momentarily.

ROXANNE

What?

CHRIS

Weren't you the playmate of the month in June, '83?

Roxanne, flabbergasted, storms into the house. But it's too late. She's gone. Henry emerges from the bushes.

HENRY

Great work!

CHRIS

I got flustered! I panicked. You've got to help me!

HENRY

I don't think I could after that.

CHRIS

(desperate)

She wants me now. God, why can't I say the right things. I feel them; I just can't say them.

Roxanne's shadow appears at her upstairs bedroom window. She is upset, we can tell.

CHRIS

(continuing)

She wants someone who looks like me and talks like you.

Henry looks up at the window. A daring, unbelievable idea enters his head.

HENRY

Let's give it to her.

CHRIS

Huh?

HENRY

It's pretty dark here.

CHRIS

What are you thinking?

HENRY

(excited)

You stand over there...under the window. I'll stand here, out of sight.

He stands below the window, hidden from view.

HENRY

(continuing)

I'll whisper to you what to say...

CHRIS

What if she hears you?

HENRY

Shhh...shhh...Call her.

CHRIS

(swept away)

Roxanne!

HENRY

No, here...

He hands him some pebbles, which Chris throws at the window. Roxanne appears.

ROXANNE

(opening the window)

Who is it?

CHRIS

It's me. Chris.

ROXANNE

Oh.

She starts to close the window.

CHRIS

I wanted to tell you...

He looks desperately at Henry.

ROXANNE

What? That I'm really built?

CHRIS

No, no, not that.

Chris DASHES frantically to under the balcony where Henry is standing.

CHRIS

(continuing,  
to Henry)

What should I say?

HENRY

(whispering)

Tell her that you were delirious.

CHRIS

What?

HENRY

(urgently)

Tell her!

He dashes out from under the balcony.

CHRIS

(to Roxanne)

I was delirious...

Henry, by acting overtly ridiculous, MIMES THE WORD "IGNORANT."

CHRIS

(still repeating)

...an ignorant,

Henry, STUMBLES around underneath the balcony, MIMING THE WORD, "BUMBLING."

CHRIS

...bumbling...

Henry SHAKES HIS HEAD AND ROLLS HIS EYES. Chris catches on.

CHRIS

...idiotic...

Henry HITS HIMSELF on the head like the three stooges.

CHRIS

...stupid...

Henry POINTS to his REAR END.

CHRIS

...pointer?

Chris gives Henry a puzzled look.

ROXANNE

Pointer?

Chris finally gets it.

CHRIS

Ass!

ROXANNE

So why did you say those things?

He dashes under the balcony.

CHRIS

(to Henry)

Why did I say those things?

HENRY

(whispering)

Fear.

He dashes back.

CHRIS

(to Roxanne)

Fear?

ROXANNE

Of me?

Again, he RUNS to Henry.

CHRIS

(to Henry)

Of her?

HENRY

(whispering

to Chris)

No! Not of her...of being in  
love.

He shoves Chris back out.

CHRIS  
(now, repeating  
precisely Henry's  
words)  
Of being in love...

HENRY  
Damn it! I can't hear her.

He EDGES dangerously close, and WHISPERS more words to Chris.  
Chris repeats them to Roxanne.

CHRIS  
(still repeating)  
Fear of what you might say to  
me... of what you might think...  
Afraid to fall for you. Fear of  
losing control of myself.

Chris gives Henry a look of "Isn't this too much?"

ROXANNE  
(turned on)  
I see.

It's not too much.

ROXANNE  
(continuing)  
Are you all right? You sound...  
odd.

Henry pulls Chris out of Roxanne's line of sight.

HENRY  
(to Chris)  
This is impossible! Give me your  
coat.

CHRIS  
What?

ROXANNE  
What's the matter with you?

HENRY  
Quick!

Chris gives him the coat. Then, standing in the shadows, his face obscured by a TREE BRANCH, he speaks up to Roxanne. His voice somewhat obscured by the wind in the trees.

HENRY

(continuing; imitating Chris' voice.)

Imagine yourself down here. Any moment, capable of being killed by you...one harsh word.

ROXANNE

I see.

HENRY

Love can be a knife.

ROXANNE

I know... I'll come down --

Chris and Henry EXCHANGE TERRIFIED GLANCES.

HENRY

No!

ROXANNE

Stand in the light so I can see you.

HENRY

NO!

ROXANNE

(extra curious)

Why?

HENRY

Let me be just a voice, a sound, saying what I want to say to you.

(then)

You kill me. Your eyes, your legs, your heart beating the blood through your body. You have never heard me really speak till now.

ROXANNE

Why not?

HENRY

Until now, I was speaking with...

ROXANNE

Yes?

HENRY

... another voice.

ROXANNE

Yes, even your voice is different.

HENRY

(moving closer)

Why shouldn't it be? I'm speaking to you for the first time. And it's strange.

ROXANNE

Why is it strange?

HENRY

To be so close, talking to you like this, and not be afraid of having you laugh at me.

ROXANNE

Why would I laugh?

HENRY

(then, struggling  
for an explanation)

Say your name.

ROXANNE

What?

HENRY

Say your name.

ROXANNE

(slowly)

Roxanne.

HENRY

Roxanne. Did you feel it? The word forming on your tongue? The air from your lungs sending it out into the air? I feel it. Every time I say it. Every time I think of you. Roxanne. I go to sleep to you. I wake up with your name in front of me. Roxanne. All day long I think, where is she? What is she doing now? Occasionally I see you on the street, and I feel you in me, the flush of blood in my stomach, a wave crashing over me, Roxanne.

ROXANNE

I don't know what to say.

HENRY

Every gesture, every move,  
however trivial to you, I  
remember. Yesterday, you  
decided to wear your hair  
different, not that much dif-  
ferent, but I noticed. And you  
know how after looking at the  
sun you can close your eyes and  
see little suns everywhere?  
Hours after seeing you my eyes  
were blinded by your after-image  
staying with me, the way your  
hair moved, your walk, your  
dress, everywhere I looked.

ROXANNE

What is that?

HENRY

It's love -- the wind over  
me -- the dark fire, the music.  
Do you begin to understand me?  
Can you feel me, there in the  
darkness, breathing into you?  
Into your heart? Don't think I  
don't know you. Don't think I  
haven't felt you beneath me. I  
know you've imagined it, lying  
back into the white sheets,  
alive.

ROXANNE

Yes, I have.

HENRY

In my most unreasonable dreams I  
have not hoped for this, saying  
these things to you. It's me  
that is making you tremble up  
there. And you are trembling,  
like a leaf on a tree.

ROXANNE

Yes.

HENRY

(after a pause)

I've done this to you. Myself.  
If only...if only...



ROXANNE

What...

HENRY

(swept away)

...I could make love to you!

She gasps. Pleasurably.

ROXANNE

Yes, yes, come up.

Instantly, swiftly, Chris GRABS THE TRELLIS that leads to Roxanne's room.

CHRIS

(whispering to  
Henry)

Great work!

He is gone. The speed with which it has all happened numbs Henry. In a flash, he has gone from speaking to her directly, to watching someone else claim his prize. Henry steps back, looking toward the window, speaking to himself.

HENRY

(to himself)

God, I did it.

Henry stands outside her window, at first watching them kiss; and then, as the lights dim, realizing fully what is about to happen.

EXT. ROXANNE'S STREET - NIGHT

It is moments later. Henry walks along, confused. He passes a house where Gertie, the elderly real estate agent, and several other elderly ladies, LYDIA, NINA AND SOPHIE, converse on the porch.

GERTIE

The son of a bitch didn't get  
the TV fixed today.

LYDIA

Shit! Where're we goin'?  
Where're we gonna watch it?

GERTIE

Roxanne said I could use her  
place if my set wasn't fixed in  
time for 'Dallas.' I've got the  
key, so let's go.

The four ladies head toward Roxanne's house. Henry, having overheard the conversation, looks up at the still dark window, knowing the lovers are still up there, and DECIDES TO PREVENT THE INTERRUPTION. He darts off. Somewhere.

ANOTHER ANGLE

The ladies continue to head toward the house. Suddenly, Henry FALLS out of a tree and lands FLAT ON THE GROUND.

HENRY

What? Where am I?

LADIES

It's Henry...!

HENRY

Where am I?

GERTIE

You're in Aspen.

HENRY

Oh God! Oh, thank God!

(he kisses the  
ground)

What day is it?

NINA

It's Friday... 'Dallas' is on.

HENRY

Friday? Then it took no time  
...it didn't exist in time.

LYDIA

What?

HENRY

Maybe it didn't happen. Maybe I  
was dreaming!

SOPHIE

What happened?

HENRY

I was walking along, when  
suddenly from behind the moon, a  
craft appeared. It got closer  
and closer. I thought it was  
some sort of movie promotion.  
Then it landed right in front of  
me! Oh, it was too horrible.

He weeps and wails.

NINA

Tell us.

GERTIE

I read about this in the 'Enquirer.' Did it have lights on it?

HENRY

Lights? You never saw so many lights! It was like Broadway! Then the door opened and a creature came and took me on board. They told me they wanted to observe me.

LYDIA

This is bullshit. We're going to miss "Dallas." Let's go.

HENRY

(crazy)

You think I'm nuts don't you?

LYDIA

(scared)

Uh...no.

HENRY

They said they wanted to ask me about older women.

NINA

Why?

HENRY

Because, they wanted to have sex with them.

GERTIE

Where?

HENRY

Here! Right here in Aspen! They said they wanted to start a colony of supermen, who would have sex with elderly women, because they really know what they're doing --

GERTIE

We do!

SOPHIE  
It's been so long....

LYDIA  
Two minutes to "Dallas."

HENRY  
Oh, if only I had some proof! I don't have anything. They didn't give me a thing, something unearthly for me to show everyone. They only took from me.

GERTIE  
Like what?

HENRY  
You know, articles of clothing so they would dress like us.

(MORE)  
HENRY  
(continuing)  
They weren't dressed very well. Big-collared shirts with loud stripes on them. They took pictures of me, of my clothes, and they took my socks.

NINA  
They took your socks?

HENRY  
Only one. They only needed one. You know, to copy.

LYDIA  
Lift up your pant leg.

HENRY  
What?

GERTIE  
Lift up your pant leg.

HENRY  
Sure.

He slowly lifts his pant leg. There is one sock missing. The ladies gasp again. Henry looks over toward the house. The light in the room is still dark.

LYDIA  
"Dallas" is starting!

HENRY

And then...and then...and I hope  
you'll forgive me -- They wanted  
to see...to see...my penis!

LADIES

Ahhhhh!

SOPHIE

Did you show it to them?

HENRY

I did, but let me tell you, it  
was embarrassing!

NINA

Well, of course.

HENRY

No, for another reason.

The women lean in.

HENRY

(continuing)

Theirs were so much bigger!

LADIES

Oohhhh.

LYDIA

(the voice of  
reason)

Girls, are you telling me you  
believe there are creatures from  
outer space with big penises who  
want to have sex with elderly  
women?? Let's go! We're  
missing "Dallas"!!

Henry looks up and sees the light in the bedroom go on. The  
ladies stare at Henry and realize they better go.

HENRY

Good night then, ladies, but  
keep your windows ajar!

NOTE: The above scene will be played noting Henry's ambivalence  
between letting them go interrupt the lovers, and keeping them  
from it. He lets them go, he stops them, etc.

EXT. SAMUELS' COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

Henry has walked back from Roxanne's house and taps on the window of the just-closed coffee shop. Dixie is inside cleaning up and opens the door for him. It's dark inside as she lets him in.

DIXIE

What's up?

HENRY

Can I sit for a while?

DIXIE

Sure. Want anything?

HENRY

Got a drink?

DIXIE

Somewhere back there.

She goes and gets some wine from the back room.

DIXIE

(continuing)

Here you go.

She pours the wine.

DIXIE

(continuing)

What's with you?

She sits.

HENRY

I made love to Roxanne tonight.

DIXIE

Gosh.

(then)

You're not supposed to tell these things, you know.

HENRY

Well, it wasn't exactly me. It was kind of me.

DIXIE

Does she know this?

(then)

What do you mean it wasn't you?

HENRY

I was the one who said all the right things, who made her feel right, who touched her. It just wasn't the actual me who made love to her. It was the sort of me.

Dixie pours herself a glass of wine.

DIXIE

What the hell are you talking about?

HENRY

I wrote love letters for Chris. He signed his name to them.

She swallows the wine in one gulp and pours herself another.

DIXIE

That is the stupidest thing I've ever heard.

HENRY

I didn't mean to. I just started writing her and then it was too late. I couldn't stop.

DIXIE

But you can't write love letters for someone else. It's not fair to her!

HENRY

Don't tell me what is fair. This was my chance to know how it could have been. She loves him. Don't you see? She loves him, but I was the one who got her there.

DIXIE

But why? Why do something for him? How can you stand to have his arms around her?

HENRY

It's not him up there, it's me!...it's me. I didn't get to actually do the ...you know, but heck, you can't have everything.  
(then)

This is as close as I can get to her.

Dixie is moved. She goes over to him. They stand in the dark.

HENRY

(continuing)

Anyway, there won't be anymore letters now. There's no reason for them.

(then)

Can I leave my car outfront tonight? I think I'll walk home.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Henry is walking home, lost in thought. We hear MUSIC, the music in his head (possibly a walkman). In the deserted street, he begins a slow, solitary waltz, with an imaginary girl in his arms.

NOTE: LOTS OF POSSIBILITIES HERE TO BE WORKED OUT LATER. PERHAPS HE SEES AN IMAGE OF ROXANNE WITH A BIG NOSE AND DANCES WITH HER (if she were ugly, he would be able to have her, etc.).

INT. MAYOR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The Mayor sits facing two NEW henchmen. Ralston paces the room.

MAYOR BLACK

Think up something, goddamn it, but put him out of commission for a while.

The two men nod their assent.

EXT. FIRE STATION - NIGHT

The two men slide under Henry's car, fiddling with wrenches and mechanic's tools.

THUG

This will take care of big nose.

THUG #2

Hey, do you think that thing about big feet applies to guys with big noses?

THUG

(mulling it)

That would be frightening.

They continue their work.



## INT. FIRE STATION - DAY

While workers install the new computer fire-monitoring system, Henry, mad at himself and mad at the world, struggles with some paperwork. Chris enters, also disturbed. Henry slams around the room for a while; Chris puts on his uniform, Henry pours coffee. It's a ballet of two preoccupied people. Then:

CHRIS

She's gone.

HENRY

(alarmed)

Gone where?

CHRIS

Just for a week. A phone call came in last night. Her sister's having a baby and she wanted her to be there.

One of the workers interrupts.

WORKER

You want to see how this works now? I think we've got it working.

HENRY

(joking)

It's not going to hurt me is it?

WORKER

No. See these green lights along here?

We see a control panel with about sixteen lights across it; not an elaborate system, but the kind a small town might have.

WORKER

(continuing)

That shows that the alarm system is on and working. If there's an actual fire, this red light will go on under it and this alarm will sound.

HENRY

Okay.

WORKER

We've got fifteen alarms wired in now, and we'll have them all in by the end of the week. See

here's the Aspen Inn, here's the Tippler...and so on. And here's a little bonus: throw this switch and you get Showtime and HBO.

HENRY

Great.

WORKER

There'll probably be a lot of malfunctions the first week or so, but we'll get it straightened out. We're going to lunch. We'll be back.

The workers leave. Chris and Henry stand alone in the room.

CHRIS

She asked me to write her a letter.

HENRY

(brightening)  
Really?

CHRIS

God. Make it good. I was so nervous last night. Uncomfortable. Believe me, I didn't say anything. I was too smart for that.

HENRY

What do you mean you were nervous? How nervous?

CHRIS

Real nervous.

HENRY

Real nervous?

CHRIS

Yeah.

HENRY

(hopefully)  
You mean so nervous that you couldn't...?

CHRIS

Man, this is embarrassing.

HENRY  
No, no. Go on.

CHRIS  
(struggling)  
I could only do it twice.

HENRY  
(crestfallen)  
Oh.

CHRIS  
Usually...Heck...I could go on  
for months. Anyway, would you  
write me a letter? Here's the  
address.

Henry takes the paper.

CHRIS  
(continuing)  
This is the last one, I pro-  
mise.

EXT. FIRE STATION - DAY

Henry walks out onto the street. He start to get in his car.

ANGLE ON

Ralston parked in his police car. He notices a car running a red light. He tries to start his car; it won't start. Ralston runs over to Henry.

RALSTON  
Sorry, commandeering your car.

HENRY  
Absolutely.

RALSTON  
That's right, sucker.

He gets in the car and roars off. Henry watches him go.

INT. MAYOR'S HOUSE - DAY

Dorothy is serving the Mayor his lunch.

INTERCUT

Ralston trying to step on the brakes.

INTERCUT

Dorothy serving the soup.

INTERCUT

Ralston, unable to stop the car, heading toward the Mayor's house.

INTERCUT

The car SMASHING though the Mayor's dining room, where Dorothy is serving lunch.

DOROTHY

Oh Jesus Christ, you again.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

We see a WIDE SHOT of an eight year old CHUBBY BOY sitting on the roof of a house. From this distance, we can only see that he is very still, staring off calmly. There is commotion in the street.

ANGLE ON

Henry, arriving by foot and in conference with a mother.

MRS. QUINN

He went up there before school  
and won't come down.

HENRY

I'll see what I can do.

Henry goes over to the porch and climbs up on the roof of the house.

EXT. ROOF - DAY

He angles over to the boy, who is sobbing silently on the roof.

HENRY

(sitting next to him)  
What is it, Peter?

We get the feeling that the boy trusts Henry.

BOY

They call me porky at school.

This is familiar territory with Henry, and it hurts him too. Sitting beside him, he puts his arm around the boy.

HENRY

Why do they have to do that.  
Goddamn it. I shouldn't say  
that in front of you.

(then)

Do you ever talk to your mother  
about it?

BOY

Once, I tried, but she said I  
had to clean up my plate first.

Henry looks at the boy, and the boy begins to laugh.

HENRY

Now see, that's good. You're  
way better than those guys who  
call you names -- you're smart  
and funny. You can make things  
up.

BOY

I didn't make it up, it's true.

HENRY

Oh.

BOY

Bastards. I shouldn't say that  
in front of you. Do I have to  
get down now?

HENRY

No. No. Hell with 'em. Let's  
just stay up here for a while.

They sit in silence, staring out into the sky.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

We see a BIG WIDE SHOT of Henry and the boy sitting on the roof  
with the fifty or so people standing below watching  
them as the sun sets behind the house. They do not move. We  
get the feeling they are going to be there for hours.

EXT. FIRE STATION - DAY

Henry walks in and tosses a letter down to Chris. Chris picks  
it up cautiously. He seems to have a new attitude about all  
this.

CHRIS

You wrote it?

HENRY

A little.

CHRIS

Thanks, Henry.

Chris goes out to mail the letter.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Chris sits at one end of an empty bar. The place is empty and SANDY, Gertie's friend, waits on him behind the bar. She is not glamorous, but attractive in a plain sort of way.

SANDY

Beer?

CHRIS

Yeah, thanks.

SANDY

Draught?

CHRIS

Yeah, a little. But I'll just put on my sweater.

Thinking Chris really meant this as a joke, she finds it wildly amusing and laughs heartily.

SANDY

(laughing)

God, that's funny. We get so many guys in here, no sense of humor, no sense of humor at all. I think a sense of humor is really important. Could you hand me those cards over there?

She indicates a deck of playing cards on the counter.

CHRIS

Sure.

SANDY

Ok. One hand of low-ball for your drink.

CHRIS

What's low-ball?

SANDY

You try to get the worst hand.

CHRIS

Oh. Okay. A low-ball for a high-ball.

This devastates Sandy. She laughs riotously.

SANDY

You're a riot.

Chris shuffles the cards, rather expertly, and deals them out.

SANDY

(continuing)

You could be a dealer in Vegas. I know because I went to Tahoe with a girlfriend of mine and we want to move there. We're going there in three days. See they like young cocktail waitresses there and you can make big money. I heard one girl got a ten thousand dollar tip from a gambler that got lucky. Then, when I get older, I can move to Reno where they like older cocktail waitresses and it's only sixty miles away. What do you got?

CHRIS

A nine, a three, a seven, a five and a two.

SANDY

(laughing)

Oh God, that's the worst hand I ever saw! You win. Where you from?

CHRIS

California.

SANDY

Oh God, you're lucky. You know where I really want to go? San Francisco.

CHRIS

I've been there.

SANDY

You have? You really have? What's it like?

CHRIS

Hills. Lots of hills. Real hilly.

SANDY

I think it's so great that you've traveled. You're really interesting.

CHRIS

I...I...try to be.

SANDY

I think if one person finds another person interesting then they're interesting to that person. You see Roxanne don't you.

CHRIS

Well, kind of. But not...not...

SANDY

I better quit talking to you. She's sort of a friend of mine.

CHRIS

No...no...that's okay. We can talk.

There is contact between them.

SANDY

Okay.

(then)

Next you're going to tell me you've been to Arizona.

CHRIS

I have...

SANDY

Jesus, I was kidding and you really have! What's your name?

CHRIS

Chris.

SANDY

I'm Sandy.

Chris has met his equal.



5/23/85

110.

INT. FIRE STATION - DAY

Henry is peering out the window watching his men practice with the hose. Chris is out there too, putting them through the paces.

ANGLE ON THE MEN

We see DEAN holding the hose, with the water coming out full blast. The power of the water is forcing him to snake around the lawn, completely out of control.

ANGLE ON HENRY

He shakes his head hopelessly. The phone rings.

HENRY

Hello?

INTERCUT ROXANNE

ROXANNE

Henry? It's me.

HENRY

It's really nice to hear your voice. How's your sister?

ROXANNE

She's fabulous. The baby's beautiful. I'm so envious. Can I speak to Chris?

HENRY

Sure. Just a minute.

Henry puts down the phone and goes to the window. He sees Chris TALKING TO SANDY as the men practice the right way to hold the hose. He starts to call him, then we see a change come across his face. He looks back at the phone and walks over to it, TAKING OUT HIS HANDKERCHIEF. He covers the phone with it and begins to speak to Roxanne.

HENRY

(disguising his  
voice, and speaking  
with passion)

Roxanne? It's Chris.

INTERCUT ROXANNE

We see Roxanne listening to the call. We see her expression change to one of, at first pleasure, then rapture. We can hear the voice filtered through the phone, but not the words. Becoming more and more entranced, she sits on the sofa, one leg up on the coffee table, and boy does she look sexy. As the

phone call continues, her hand drops languorously between her legs. The CAMERA MOVES IN on her face.

INTERCUT HENRY

He says goodbye, hangs up and pockets the handkerchief.

INT. SAMUELS' CAFE - NIGHT

It's not too busy, and Henry sits in the cafe writing a letter. Dixie sets some coffee down for him and sits down. She gestures, "what are you doing?"

HENRY

(continuing)

I am finishing my last letter to Roxanne...signing Chris' name of course.

DIXIE

I though you said you weren't going to write any more.

HENRY

Yes. It's amazing what three glasses of wine late at night can do to a vow.

DIXIE

Well, so, one letter.

HENRY

Well, uh...I've written her everyday this week...signing Chris' name of course. Each letter more gooey than the last.

DIXIE

Listen, Chris is just as guilty as you are...for letting you do it.

HENRY

That's the very, very interesting and wildly dangerous part. Chris doesn't know.

DIXIE

How do you figure to get out of this one?

HENRY

I'll tell Chris before she comes back tomorrow night. Frankly, I

don't think he'll care. I've  
just got this last letter to  
give her.

He folds up the letter and seals it. A bottle of wine is  
delivered by Johnson, who is in his fireman's gear.

JOHNSON

Here you go. I should get paid  
for all I do around here.

He goes back to the counter.

DIXIE

I wonder who she'd choose.

HENRY

What do you mean?

DIXIE

If she knew the truth, I wonder  
who she'd choose.

HENRY

(stern)

She can never know the truth.  
Dixie, promise me you'll never  
tell.

DIXIE

Why can't she know?

HENRY

She would hate me.

Henry looks curiously over at Johnson.

HENRY

(continuing,  
to Johnson)

Hey, Johnson. How come you're  
in uniform. You're supposed to  
be off tonight.

JOHNSON

Chris asked me to stand in for  
him. Roxanne called around six.  
Said she was coming in tonight.  
He picked her up at eight-  
thirty.

Panic crosses Henry's face. Dixie looks at him in horror.

HENRY

(panicked)  
Shit. They'd be at her place by  
now. I've got to tell him about  
the letters...and the phone  
call.

DIXIE

Phone call?

She downs the wine. As he does, he knocks a glass over onto  
his letter. He quickly dries it out and folds it into the  
envelope. Henry tears out of the restaurant and exits.

EXT. ROXANNE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Henry runs up to the outside of Roxanne's window. He looks up  
and sees her and Chris outlined in the upstairs bedroom.  
Desperate, he runs to the front door and RINGS THE DOORBELL.  
He RUNS back to the window to see who answers it. We can  
faintly hear Roxanne say "I'll see who it is." Henry CLIMBS UP  
the trellis.

INT. ROXANNE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

NOTE: THIS SCENE WILL BE CHOREOGRAPHED TO SPLIT SECOND TIMING.

Henry enters the bedroom and confronts a confused Chris.

CHRIS

What????

HENRY

I don't have time to explain  
...Just don't look surprised if  
she mentions more letters...

CHRIS

What do you mean?

HENRY

You wrote her more letters that  
you thought...

CHRIS

I did?

We hear Roxanne's FOOTSTEPS coming up the stairs.

ROXANNE (v.o.)

There was no one there...

HENRY

(whispering to Chris)

Shit! I'll ring the doorbell  
again.

He dashes out the window and down the trellis, NARROWLY AVOID-  
ING ROXANNE. He RUNS to the front door again and rings the  
doorbell.

INT. ROXANNE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Roxanne and Chris hear the doorbell again.

ROXANNE  
What is going on?

She starts to go but Chris, thinking he's supposed to go to the  
door, stops her.

CHRIS  
No...Let me get it.

He exits the bedroom and goes down the step.

EXT. ROXANNE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Henry, having rung the doorbell, runs around and climbs the  
trellis again, thinking Chris is waiting for him.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Roxanne steps out into the hall just long enough for Henry to  
enter the room.

HENRY  
(whispering)  
Chris?

He hears Roxanne's voice just outside the door. He freezes in  
fear.

ROXANNE (v.o.)  
Who is it, Chris?

EXT. FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Chris looks around earnestly for Henry.

CHRIS  
(shouting)  
Uh...I'm looking...

INT. HALL - NIGHT

Roxanne sees that the French doors are open in her bedroom.  
She goes in to close them.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

She swings the bedroom door open, we see Henry HIDDEN BEHIND THE DOOR. The door stops MICRO-INCHES away from his nose. Terror on his face, he sighs relief as Roxanne LEAVES the bedroom for downstairs. He SEES Chris' coat on the bed and PUTS HIS LAST LETTER IN THE POCKET. He goes to the French doors. THEY ARE LOCKED! He hears the two coming back up the stairs and DUCKS INTO A CLOSET. Roxanne and Chris enter.

CHRIS

Just kids probably.

Roxanne stops and stares at Chris. Something is coming. He pours herself some wine.

ROXANNE

I want to know you. I want to know the side you don't show me.

CHRIS

Huh?

ROXANNE

Do you know why I came back early?

CHRIS

No.

ROXANNE

I couldn't stand it anymore.  
Your letters drew me back here.  
I had to see you now.

CHRIS

Just a few letters, that's all.

ROXANNE

Think of what you wrote.

CHRIS

Uh..I'm trying.

ROXANNE

Each one more powerful, more sexual than the last.

ANGLE ON HENRY

He listens and sweats in the closet.

BACK TO ROXANNE

She starts to undress herself and a reluctant Chris, who is looking around the room for Henry.

ROXANNE

(continuing)

I want to know the real you.  
The one you're keeping from me.

CHRIS

No...not the real me.

ROXANNE

The one I spoke to the night at  
that window.

CHRIS

This is me. I'm basically just  
very cute.

ROXANNE

(still undressing him)

I don't care about cute. I'm  
ashamed of myself for liking you  
because you're cute. I love  
what's in there...

She points to his head.

CHRIS

In here?

(points to his head)

Oh, no. Couldn't I just be  
cute?

ROXANNE

Don't you see? It wouldn't  
matter if you were ugly even.

CHRIS

I think I'm going to be sick.

At that moment, the FIRE ALARM SOUNDS! The two look toward the town. Chris springs into action.

CHRIS

I gotta go...!

They both put on their clothes, The LETTER is left on the bed. After they leave the room, Henry emerges from the closet and runs to the French doors, forcing them open. He CLIMBS down the trellis.

EXT. ROXANNE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Henry shows up, pretending that he just happened along, as Chris gets in his car. Roxanne utters her surprised hellos.

CHRIS

I've got to go by my house and  
get my gear....

HENRY

Don't worry about it. It's that  
goddamn computer.

(to Roxanne)

Can you take me to the station?

ROXANNE

Sure.

They drive off; Chris alone and Roxanne driving Henry.

INT. FIRE STATION - NIGHT

Henry gets out of the car. He stops. HIS NOSE SNIFFS THE AIR.

HENRY

My God. It's real.

Henry runs halfway up the stairs and is met by Johnson. The four volunteers are expertly readying the truck.

HENRY

(continuing)

Where is it?

JOHNSON

It's the Opera House.

HENRY

Let's go!

He gives them a load of instructions, then jumps into his advance car and goes over to the Opera House.

INT. SANDY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Chris runs in, panting. Sandy is standing with packed bags.

SANDY

Did you tell her?

CHRIS

I couldn't!

SANDY

You've got to. It's not nice.



CHRIS  
I just couldn't say it to her.  
(then)  
Got any paper? I could write  
it.

She hands him some paper.

SANDY  
I'll leave you alone.

She exits, and we see Chris sit down to struggle with the letter.

EXT. OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT

Not a visible fire yet, but there is smoke pouring from the windows. The truck arrives and the firemen somehow expertly dash from the vehicle. Henry is on the scene directing everything. The men, now thoroughly trained, expertly unroll hoses and hook up equipment. THEY AMAZE US WITH THEIR PROFICIENCY. Henry runs up to a VICTIM of the fire, who has been overcome by smoke.

HENRY  
Is anyone in there?

VICTIM  
I don't know. There was just a  
few of us working late.

HENRY  
(continuing)  
Anyone missing?

VICTIM  
I haven't seen Ted.

The Mayor arrives and overhears the last part of the conversation. He quickly takes Ralston aside.

MAYOR BLACK  
(to Ralston)  
Nobody goes in there.

RALSTON  
There's somebody in there.

MAYOR BLACK  
Nobody goes in.

RALSTON  
(angry)

Everyone was supposed to be  
out --

Racing by, Henry overhears this last bit of conversation.  
The Mayor races to the men.

MAYOR BLACK  
Nobody goes in there.

HENRY  
Why?

MAYOR BLACK  
(stumbling)  
It's....too dangerous. I order  
you not to go in.

HENRY  
(suspicious)  
Why?

There is a pause. Henry gets an angry look on his face, and  
swings a look at his men.

HENRY  
Let's go.

Henry and his men race inside.

INT. OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT

It doesn't look like much from the outside, but inside the  
place is BLAZING. The men fly to the rear of the building where  
they spot several people trapped by the flames. Henry PLUNGES  
into the flames and gets to one of them. He picks him up with  
the fireman's hold and dashes through the wall of flame. The  
others act just as bravely, rescuing people right and left in a  
surprising display of skill and bravery.

EXT. OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT

Henry runs out and hands over the person to first-aid. He runs  
over to Johnson, who is in full gear.

HENRY  
Come on, Johnson, we're going  
in!

JOHNSON  
Yes, sir!

The Mayor gets physical with Henry.

MAYOR BLACK

Nobody goes in!

HENRY

Don't get in the way of your  
Aunt Shirley!

Henry CUTS down the Mayor with one blow.

MONTAGE

Various shots of the fire being extinguished.

EXT. OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT

The fire has dwindled. Several NEWSMEN with video cameras, rush up to Henry.

REPORTER

Any idea what started the fire?

Henry shifts his look to the Mayor who is standing nearby.

HENRY

The Mayor.

He shoves them aside, and returns to his duties at the fire.

INT. SAMUELS' CAFE - DAY

The fire is out. The firemen are at Dixie's celebrating their victory. It's a real gala event, lots of townspeople toasting etc. Suddenly and with a flourish, Henry enters.

HENRY

Where are my men?

The place falls silent.

HENRY

(continuing)

And I mean men!

He walks up to his firemen.

HENRY

(continuing)

You're all real goddamn firemen  
now.

He puts his arms around each one of them.

HENRY

(continuing)

And I got you these Hawaiian shirts. These are our new uniforms. We're going to be known as the renegade maverick Hawaiian fire department. I'm proud of each one of you.

A cheer goes up. There is general celebrating and toasting. Dixie comes over to Henry.

DIXIE  
Telephone for you. It's Roxanne.

He goes over to the phone, concerned.

HENRY  
Yeah?.....Sure...I'll come right over.

He looks over at Dixie and shrugs his shoulders.

HENRY  
Roxanne asked if I could come over. She sounded...disturbed. I'll be back.

He leaves.

EXT. ROXANNE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Henry approaches her house. Roxanne, anticipating his arrival, opens the door. She is distraught. Her faces aches with confusion.

ROXANNE  
Henry.

HENRY  
What is it?

ROXANNE  
I don't know. I got a letter from Chris...

HENRY  
Yeah...

ROXANNE  
Well, actually two letters.

HENRY  
(surprised)  
Two?

ROXANNE

Yes, two. One was upstairs on my bed, one was slid under the door.

HENRY

Slid under the door...?

ROXANNE

Yes. God, what's going on? Where's Chris?

HENRY

I don't know.

ROXANNE

Here's one of the letters. The one that was at the door.

She hands him a letter.

ROXANNE

Go on. Read it.

He nervously opens the letter and reads it aloud.

HENRY

(reading)

"Dear Roxanne: I've met somebody else and she's real cute too. I hope I haven't hurt you but I probably did. I was really great knowing you and now I'm going to be a dealer in Tahoe. Yours truly, Chris."

Henry is shattered.

HENRY

(to himself)

Chris, you stupid...

ROXANNE

And then, I found this...

She hands him the last letter he wrote to her.

ROXANNE

(continuing)

...on the bed.

She produces the letter and gives it to Henry. He starts to read it silently.

HENRY

Uh, huh.

ROXANNE

Read it aloud.

Roxanne walks in front of him. She cannot see him, only hear him.

HENRY

"Dear Roxanne: You must think it's strange that I have so much to say in these letters and so little to say when we're together. I guess, face to face, I'm slightly dazzled by you...unable to speak.

He stops reading. She turns.

ROXANNE

Go on...

Henry's voice becomes enchanted, like the night under the balcony. We see Roxanne's face; there is a faint look of recognition.

HENRY

(continuing)

"...But at night. At night, When I'm alone, I can close my eyes and be anything. Be anywhere, and I think of a word. One word, and the feelings come. One word...

Roxanne turns and sees that Henry is moved. She still senses something about the voice, but turns back.

HENRY

(continuing)

"...Because for me, there is only one word that means anything anymore....

Something jars her; she turns and looks at Henry, shocked. They are now directly on the spot where Henry spoke to her at her window.

HENRY

(continuing)

"...the word that is everything. The word that is the earth, air, fire and water...

Roxanne looks up at the window where she stood that night.

HENRY

"...the word that is the stars  
and the comets and the rainbows.  
And that word is a name, and the  
name is Roxanne."

He stops and recovers. She looks at him quizzically.

ROXANNE

What were you reading?

HENRY

Huh?

ROXANNE

I said what were you reading?

HENRY

The letter.

ROXANNE

What was that last part?

HENRY

Just the last part of the  
letter.

ROXANNE

No. The last part had a stain on  
it. A water stain or something.  
I wasn't able to read the end.  
How did you know it?

HENRY

(covering)

He would try out the letters on  
me before he sent them.

ROXANNE

Oh.

ANGLE ON ROXANNE

She turns and walks a few steps. Then she looks up at the  
window where she stood, and looks back at Henry.

ANGLE ON HENRY

He stands rooted on the spot, afraid to move.

ANGLE ON ROXANNE

She turns away again, walks a few more steps and turns back to him, looks, then walks away again, thinking. She then stops and turns back to him, again looking at the window where she was that night.

ROXANNE

That was your voice that night.  
...all this time, you were right  
there in front of me, and I  
couldn't see you.

At that moment, THE COMET APPEARS IN THE SKY. She looks at Henry, the comet over his head, and walks over to him, calmly, putting her arms around him, understanding everything. Henry stands stiffly, his face betraying deep emotion. They turn and walk slowly AWAY FROM US, back to the house, her arms around him.

The End